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ZONE

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LISA MAXWELL

TALKS TO ZONE ABOUT PLAYING JUDY GARLAND IN NEW MUSICAL, END OF THE RAINBOW

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LUCY SPRAGGAN

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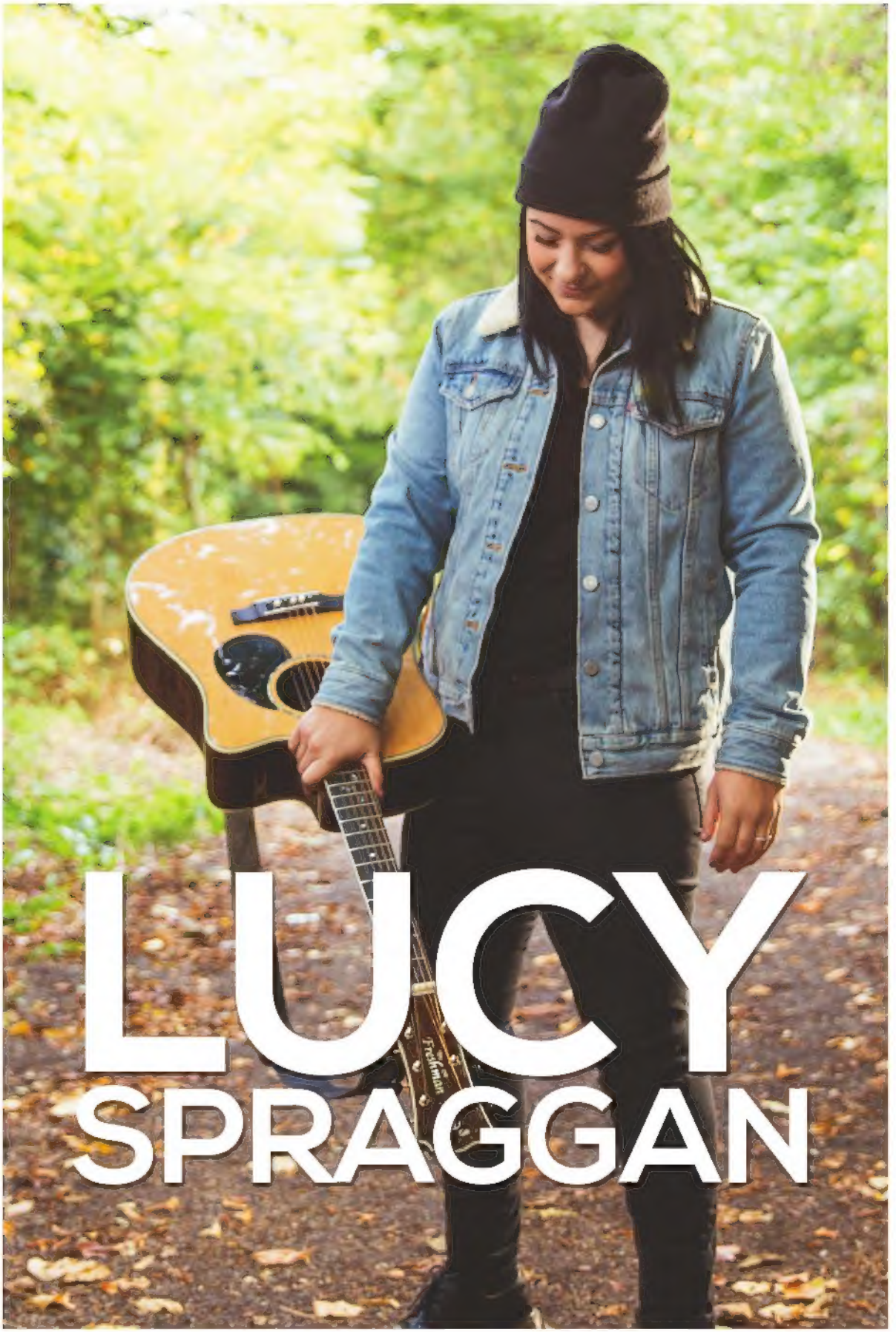
LUCY
SPRAGGAN

Lucy Spraggan shot to fame back in 2012 after appearing on the ninth series of The X Factor - and despite leaving the show due to illness, she's not been doing too badly for herself in the ensuing years. Having had three Top 40 albums, one of which entered the Top 10, the Beer Fear singer is heading back out on tour this month.
No stranger to performing in the Midlands, Spraggan has played at Birmingham Pride and local lesbian festival L Fest. Here, she tells us about her career, her new tour and what's coming up in the future...

You're heading back out on tour this month. Is it exciting to be back on the road?

I always love being on the road, it's definitely when I'm at my happiest. I love being out there, playing my songs and meeting the people who come to my shows.

What can fans expect to see from this acoustic tour?

Well, it's just me and a little bit of piano. I've been touring with a full band since I left the show, so this is the first time I've gone out there pretty much on my own. It's a bit scary but at the same time so exciting. I'll be playing the songs from my last two albums and also some new ones from my EP, which is out soon.

What do you get most excited about when on tour?

I think meeting the fans after the show is my favourite part. I've always made an effort to meet as many as I can, to get some pictures and talk about the show.

You've got a couple of dates in the Midlands - Birmingham and Stoke. Do you enjoy coming here?

Yes, I love the Midlands - they're always good shows here. Birmingham and Stoke have actually both sold out, so they'll be good ones to come to if you got a ticket in time.

> "Birmingham Pride is probably the most crazy one of them all, the atmosphere is electric."

Speaking of the Midlands, you're a bit of a regular at Birmingham Pride. Do you enjoy performing at Pride events?

The Pride events are the highlight of my summer. I have so much fun at them. They're always a brilliant, friendly atmosphere and everyone is just having a great time. Birmingham Pride is probably the most crazy of them all - the atmosphere is electric.

You're also no stranger to Midlands lesbian event L Fest. What does the event mean to you?

It's a great concept and a great festival. I headlined the main stage last year and it was brilliant.

What can be the hardest part about performing?

In terms of festivals, it's probably winning the crowd over in the first instance. In the early days, before people knew my name, I remember it was always a challenge to first get them interested and then keep them interested. I wrote some of the songs, like Last Night and Jeremy Kyle, for exactly that reason, to make sure I got their attention. Then, when I did, I could play some of my more serious songs!

> "I think meeting the fans after the show is my favourite part. I've always made an effort to meet as many as I can."

And the best?

The best part of performing is seeing people singing along to the words. That's so rewarding.

Has your musical direction changed since you first appeared on The X Factor? Or are you still true to form?

I've not really changed my style. I was pretty true to myself when I went on the show. I only ever wanted to play my own songs, and only ever did covers that I already played when doing my own gigs. I suppose you could say my latest album, We Are, is a little more grown up, but that's just a natural progression.

You released a new album in 2015. Are there any plans for new music this year?

Yes, I have a new EP out soon, called Home. It's a little four-track EP with some new tracks and also a rework of Tea And Toast. Then I'll be working towards album number three throughout the year. Hopefully it'll be ready by winter.

Who and what inspires you to create music?

Everything does really, but particularly the people around me - my friends and family.

Last year was a big one for you. Not only did you release your new album, you also got engaged. Are plans underway for the big day?

They've been underway for quite a while now! We get married in June, so there's still plenty to do.

What's been the highlight of your career so far?

I couldn't really pinpoint one thing. I've been lucky to play some great shows, festivals and arenas. I think the live shows, on the whole, have been my highlight so far.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

I just want to carry on doing what I'm doing, writing music I love and playing shows. Careers in music can be short-lived, but I have a bunch of fans who're demanding more all the time - so for as long as they still want more, I'll keep writing and playing!

Finally, if you could take a selfie with one person, dead or alive, who would it be?

Johnny Cash, probably!

Lucy Spraggan performs at Birmingham Pride!

Lucy Spraggan plays the **O2 Academy, Birmingham**, on **Friday 19 February.**

AT THE END OF

Loose Woman Lisa Maxwell

In early 1969, after a string of unsuccessful shows generates a bout of bad press, a damaged and deteriorating Judy Garland attempts to get her life and career back on track with the help of her newest husband, Mickey Deans, and her devoted friend and accompanist, Anthony. But will a five-week run at London's Talk Of The Town be enough to rekindle a star that's rapidly burning out, and can she rely on the good intentions of the men around her? Before the end of June that year, Garland's drug dependence would get the better of her, resulting in her tragic early death.
So goes the story of Peter Quilter's End Of The Rainbow, a poignant window onto the final days of one of Hollywood's greatest icons. In a new production of the show directed by Mercury Theatre's Daniel Buckroyd and touring to Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month, Lisa Maxwell (The Bill, Loose Women) stars as Judy Garland, alongside Gary Wilmot and Sam Attwater as Anthony and Mickey. What's On spoke to the leading lady to learn more.

"I'm absolutely in love with Judy, and I feel very protective of her at the moment"

"I'm absolutely in love with Judy, and I feel very protective of her at the moment," says Maxwell. "When I was little, I was such a fan of the family that I wrote a letter to Jim'll Fix It asking if I could do a duet with Liza Minnelli."

Maxwell is far from alone in her admiration. In portraying such an enormously popular figure, she's mindful of the expectations that many audience members will be bringing with them to the show.

"The thing I think I'm most worried about is really giving people what they expect,

THE RAINBOW

plays Judy Garland...

because there'll be a lot of Judy Garland fans in the audience. Also, as a fan of her myself, I want to do her justice. Die-hard Judy fans know everything about her, so I hope that with this play we're giving them what they know and love. For those who aren't fans, we're telling a sometimes funny, sometimes touching story of a woman with a serious alcohol and pill addiction problem."

The two characters who share the stage with Judy in this show are almost symbolic of the double pull of her public and personal life. Though mostly confident of her audience's adoration, off-stage she struggled to build trust and maintain stable relationships with other people.

"I hope that people see her vulnerability, as well as how absolutely hilarious she was"

"I know at times she behaved appallingly towards other people, but she had no idea of how to love or be loved because she was never shown," Maxwell explains. "Her relationship with Anthony is one that she's comfortable with because he's just there to serve her. Even though he's a gay man, there's a lot of chemistry between them, and he's partly there to represent her love for her audience. With Mickey Deans, on the other hand, she has quite a volatile relationship, although she's very much in love with him. I think he loves her too, but as a frustrated musician, he's nonetheless aware of the opportunities that being married to her can bring him. He's actually her fifth husband, although she keeps calling him husband number four because she can't remember."

Despite having watched all her films growing up, Maxwell has spent time researching the woman behind the stardom, reading biographies and watching clips of her performances on YouTube.

"I want to give the character as much depth as possible. It's important to say that this is a play with songs rather than a musical, so we're trying to tell a very truthful story that's wonderfully punctuated with all these moments where we see her in concert. I hope that people see her vulnerability, as well as how absolutely hilarious she was."

One difficulty, of course, is that during her final months, Garland had not been performing as well as at the peak of her career, presenting anyone portraying this period of her life with a choice of whether to emphasise that decline, or to focus on the talent that made her famous. Maxwell knows where she stands.

"I want to be able to sing all the songs well, and I've been seeing a vocal coach for a few months. Yes, she wasn't at the top of her game towards the end, but the one thing that she was always able to do was to turn it on and make magic happen on stage. I'm not allowing myself to say, 'Oh, it doesn't matter if you can't sing it, because she was at the end of her life'. I'm not taking that easy way out."

After five years presenting ITV's Loose Women, Maxwell is relishing the challenge of getting stuck into a tough acting role again. With her teenage daughter now old enough not to need her mum around so much, it's the perfect time to get back on stage and start touring again, though family life remains important to her. Outside work, she's also vice-patron of the Cotswolds Dogs & Cats Home and has been helping to raise money for a new, top-quality facility in Gloucestershire.

"It's going really well. We're there now and we're going to be opening in May. Hopefully it's going to be the best rescue centre ever! The facilities for the animals are wonderful and there are great working conditions for the staff so that when they come, they'll stay. I'm amazed that in an area where nature and animal life play such a big role there are still so many animals being mistreated. It's a real passion of mine to see this facility flourish. That said, I can't take any of the credit for everything the people who've been with the charity for years have done - they've raised every penny themselves."

Lisa Maxwell stars in **End Of The Rainbow** at Coventry's **Belgrade Theatre** from **Tuesday 23** until **Saturday 27 February, Malvern Theatres** from **Tuesday 5** until **Saturday 9 April**, Wolverhampton's **Grand Theatre** from **Monday 18** until **Wednesday 20 April** and Birmingham's **New Alexandra Theatre** from **Tuesday 21** until **Saturday 25 June**.

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- ○ Fever
- ○ Over 3 weeks of diarrhoea
- ○ Enlarged lymph nodes

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BELINDA LANG

West End favourite stars in a snapshot of Soviet espionage on stage at The REP...

"The Queen is hard. You think you know how to play her, but when you come to actually do it, you realise how difficult it is."

At the height of the Cold War, while touring with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Moscow, the flamboyant stage and screen star Coral Browne is thrown into an unexpected encounter with the notorious gay Cambridge spy, Guy Burgess.

Years later, while supervising the restoration of a Titian painting, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures Anthony Blunt discusses art and forgery with the monarch, around the time of his exposure as a member of the same spy ring.

In a new production of Alan Bennett's Single Spies by the Birmingham REP in collaboration with Chichester Festival Theatre, these two snapshots of Soviet espionage are brought to life on stage by Nicholas Farrell (The Iron Lady, The Lady in The Van, Legend), David Robb (Downton Abbey, Wolf Hall, The Young Victoria) and Belinda Lang (2point4 Children, Second Thoughts, Dear John), directed by Olivier Award nominee Rachel Kavanaugh.

Midlands recently caught up with Belinda about her two very different roles in the play.

"Coral Browne is very theatrical," says Lang, "she's an 'actressy actress', whereas the Queen is almost the opposite. She's not interested in gossip, and she even mentions how actors just talk about themselves all the time."

A singular, colourful presence, famed for her wicked sense of humour, Coral Browne left an indelible mark on the acting world. Lang recalls growing up with an even keener awareness of her "legendary personality" than of her performances.

"My mother was slightly younger than Coral, but they were acting at a similar time, and she's very much someone I remember being spoken of. She was just outrageous and terribly funny, speaking with this foul language and always telling it like it is. I think being Australian gave her a different take on the manners of the day. Of course, she was also married to Vincent Price, who was one of my great TV heroes, so that made her all the more interesting to me."

Anyone taking on this role has the unique advantage - or challenge, depending on

how you look at it - of being able to refer to the rea Coral Browne s own take on the story In the film version of the play's first act, An Englishman Abroad Browne actually plays herself. "I th nk she was a bit too old to play her younger self by the time she came to do it. I've watched the film just to see, but I've decided to play her more the way that Alan's written her than the way she is in the film."

Meanwhile, the Queen s character is a trickier thing to get a handle on as well as being rather less flamboyant than Browne she has something of an obligation to keep strong opinions under wraps, and to maintain a quietly dignified demeanour, at least in public

"The Queen is hard. You think you know how to play her but when you come to actually do it you realise how difficult it is. It's very easy to go into a caricature and do a ridiculously posh voice, but actually, she's not like that at all I've been watching lots of footage of her from over the years but in the end, I'm not an impressionist, I'm an actor, so I m not going to try to do an impersonation of her."

Fortunately, Lang will have the interval to make the transition enough time to slip into a new character, as well as a new costume Browne herself famously took issue with the costumes in the original National Theatre production, describing Prunella Scales' outfit as a "defamation", comprised of "fake fur and hats that wouldn't have come out of a grab bag at the Salvy Army on Boxing Day"

"When they first did the play at the National Theatre, it was at a time when people were very anxious about using real fur, so they got a fake one," Lang explains. "Browne was absolutely appalled by this because she loved furs, and had famously managed to get a fur coat in every show she was in or at least that's what's said of her She was apparently so horrified that she donated a real fur to the theatre, which they got rid of shortly afterwards I'm afraid as a homage to Coral I m going to be wearing real fur I don't want her ghost coming and haunting us!"

It's not only the characters looks and personalities that are distinct the nature of their relationships with the two spies could also hardly be further apart.

"Coral Browne only met Guy Burgess once, although they had a little correspondence after that. so this is just the true story of the one meeting they had On the other hand, for the Queen Anthony Blunt was on her staff for years, so he was very much a part of her world."

As the story has it, Burgess barged into Browne's dressing room during the interval of a production of Hamlet in which she was playing the Danish Queen, Gertrude. Later,

she was invited to his Moscow flat, where she measured him for a suit he wanted ordered from his London tailor The specifics of the conversation between Blunt and the Queen are drawn more from Alan Bennett's imagination, whereby a discussion of faked paintings once believed to be real serves as a clever metaphor for Blunt's betrayal Their interaction nevertheless offers some profound insights into the impact of espionage on the lives of those involved

"People like Burgess were huge figures at the time, and the papers were just full of stories about this spy ring, and endless speculation about who the fourth man was and then the fifth man Even today, people still talk about it and say there must have been others involved but of course none of that will ever be known now it's all kept under firm wraps for reasons of security, as well as out of embarrassment. Still, the play isn't so much about spying as it is about the aftermath of it, and having to live a lonely life because of it."

True to form. Bennett blends comedy with tragedy to bring a touching humanity to figures once held up as dangerous traitors "He's a very affectionate writer, and it's something that you notice particularly when you're doing this play because he's very sympathetic towards these people who were vilified in their day. Anthony Blunt was supposed to have been rather unpleasant but Alan's made him as hilarious and tolerable as he possibly could. Not because he approved of spying but because that's what he does with his characters he presents them with all their foibles, but he doesn't ask you to judge them, and he makes them kind of loveable and funny."

Lang has previously described Bennett as "one of those rocks that makes our country sit together artistically", possessing talents that extend beyond his compelling character development.

"His use of language is beautiful, and he just captures things in a way that seems so effortless, though I'm sure it must take him hours and hours to create such sensitive work

When you're learning one of his scripts, you feel like he's put every word in the right place. He also has this very English humour It's hard to put your finger on something like that, but you can almost imagine him laughing as he writes."

The quiet introspection and gentle pacing that tend to characterise Bennett's work are a far cry from Lang's previous performances at Birmingham theatres which included Aunt Eller in the classic Rogers & Hammerstein musical 'Oklahoma!' at the Hippodrome, and Ella Khan in a 2009 REP production of East Is East which met with an exuberant reception

"I had a brilliant time," she says of working on East Is East, "It was extraordinary more like an event than a typical theatre piece because it was jam-packed with all these people who just shouted wonderful things out. I loved every second of it! It will be interesting to come back and do a slightly less notous play - let's hope this gets a warm reception too!"

Single Spies shows at **The REP**, Birmingham from Wednesday 17 - Saturday 27 February.

MIDLANDS ZONE

Readers'

The Top 5 Finalists

After more than 8,700 votes were cast in Part One of the Readers' Awards, we're pleased to announce your top five finalists in each category. Online voting has now re-opened so that you can vote for your winner! Voting will continue right the way through until 29 February. All previous votes will be added to the new votes cast. Make sure you pick up a copy of the April issue of Midlands Zone, because that's where you'll see all of your winners! In the meantime, get voting now at **www.midlandszone.co.uk**

Best Birmingham Gay Nightclub

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Boltz**
2. **Club Chic**
3. **The Core**
4. **The Nightingale**
5. **The Village Underground**

Best Midlands Gay Nightclub (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Gorgeous** - Wolverhampton
2. **Gossip** - Stoke-On-Trent
3. **Helsinki** - Leicester
4. **The Lion** - Walsall
5. **Rainbows** - Coventry

Best Birmingham Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Eden**
2. **The Loft Lounge**
3. **Missing**
4. **Sidewalk**
5. **The Village Inn**

Best Midlands Gay Bar (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **The Lion** - Walsall
3. **Pink** - Stoke on Trent
4. **Rainbow & Dove** - Leicester
5. **The White Hart** - Wolverhampton

Best Midlands Community Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **Eden** - Birmingham
3. **Equator** - Birmingham
4. **The Fox** - Birmingham
5. **The Wellington** - Birmingham

Best Midlands Cafe Bar / Restaurant

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Bond Street Tavern** - Wlhampton
2. **Bossa** - Leicester
3. **The Loft Lounge** - Birmingham
4. **The Red Lion** - Walsall
5. **Sidewalk** - Birmingham

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Men

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Boltz** - Birmingham
2. **Eden** - Birmingham
3. **The Fountain Inn** - Birmingham
4. **Gossip** - Stoke-on-Trent
5. **The Lion** - Walsall

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Women

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **The Fox** - Birmingham
2. **Gossip** - Stoke-on-Trent
3. **The Nightingale** - Birmingham
4. **Sidewalk** - Birmingham
5. **The White Hart** - Wolverhampton

Best Midlands Venue Outdoor Area

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **Eden** - Birmingham
3. **Gossip** - Stoke-on-Trent
4. **The Lion** - Walsall
5. **The Loft Lounge** - Birmingham

Best Midlands New Venue / Refurb

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Clone Zone** - B'ham (Fetish Floor)
2. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
3. **Glamorous** - Birmingham
4. **Gorgeous** - Wolverhampton
5. **Moments Cafe** - LGBT Centre

Best Midlands venue Front of House Team

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **Eden** - Birmingham
3. **Gossip** - Stoke-on-Trent
4. **The Nightingale** - Birmingham
5. **The Village Inn** - Birmingham

Best Midlands venue Security Team

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Eden** - Birmingham
2. **Gossip** - Stoke-on-Trent
3. **Missing** - Birmingham
4. **The Nightingale** - Birmingham
5. **The Village Inn** - Birmingham

Best OVERALL Birmingham Venue

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Eden**
2. **The Loft Lounge**
3. **Missing**
4. **The Nightingale**
5. **The Village Inn**

Best OVERALL Midlands Venue (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **Gorgeous** - Wolverhampton
3. **Gossip** - Stoke on Trent
4. **The Lion** - Walsall
5. **Rainbows** - Coventry

Best Midlands Venue One-Nighter

Top 5 Finalists:

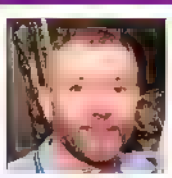
1. **Block Party**
   @ Gorgeous Wolverhampton
2. **Midsbears**
   @ Eden Birmingham
3. **So it Goes**
   @ The Nightingale Birmingham
4. **Tin Tins**
   @ Club Chic Birmingham
5. **XXL**
   @ The Core Club Birmingham

Best Midlands Live Entertainment venue

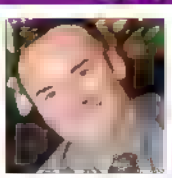
Top 5 Finalists:

1. **Dover Castle** - Leicester
2. **Eden** - Birmingham
3. **The Nightingale** - Birmingham
4. **The Village Inn** - Birmingham
5. **The White Hart** - Wolverhampton

Scene Personality of the Year

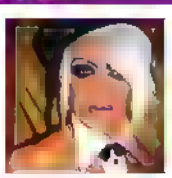


1. Garry Prentice



2. Lawrence Barton

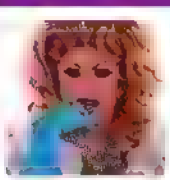
3. Miss Penny



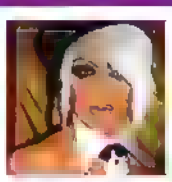
4. Marty Smith

5. Andy King

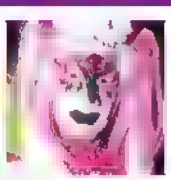
Best Compere/Host in the Midlands



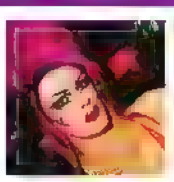
1. Miss Penny



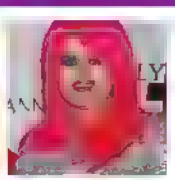
2. Marty Smith



3. Twiggy



4. Charlotte the Harlotte



5. Candy Fierce

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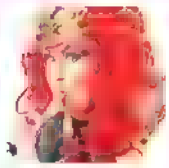
Best Cabaret Act In the Midlands

- Glitter Lips

- Miss Penny

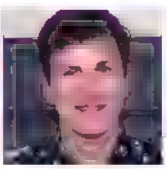
- Tilly

- Twiggy

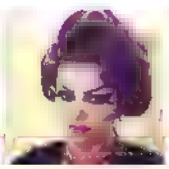

- Tiara Thunderpussy

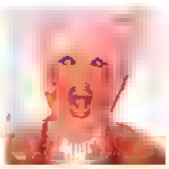
Best National Cabaret Act

- La Voix


- Charlie Hides

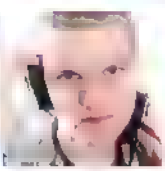
- Sandra

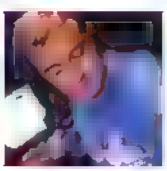

- Baga Chipz

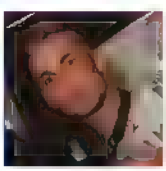

- Drag With No Name

Best Midlands Bar DJ

- Dan Williams
  Eden


- Deano Trickett
  - The Village Inn


- Mike Emery
  - Missing


- Richard Moon
  - The Village Inn

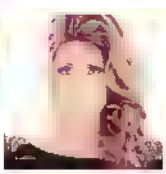
- Rob Lambeth
  - Rainbow & Dove

Best Midlands Club DJ

- Rob Lambeth
  Heisenki

- Michael Felton
  So It Goes (N'Gale)

- Corey Hadley
  - The Nightingale


- Destiny Dyson
  Gossip

- Simon Baker
  The Nightingale

Best Midlands Pride Event

Top 5 Finalists

1. Birmingham Pride
2. Leicester Pride
3. Nottinghamshire Pride
4. Stoke-On-Trent Pride
5. Walsall Pride

Best Midlands LGBT Event

Top 5 Finalists

1. Family Pride, Leek
2. L Fest, Staffordshire
3. Picnic in the Park, Birmingham
4. Rainbow Film Festival, S'bury
5. SHOUT Festival, Birmingham

Best LGBT Charity or Group of Achievement

Top 5 Finalists

1. AB+
2. Birmingham LGBT (Umbrella)
3. LGBT Network Wolverhampton
4. Terrence Higgins Trust
5. Trade Sexual Health

Best LGBT Sport or Social Group

Top 5 Finalists

1. Acting Out
2. BGSO
3. Birmingham Blaze FC
4. Birmingham Bulls RFC
5. Leicester Wildecats

Best Midlands Health Club / Sauna

Top 5 Finalists

1. CS2 - Nottingham
2. The Greenhouse - Darlaston
3. Splash - Leicester
4. Spartan - Birmingham
5. Unit 2 - Birmingham

Best LGBT-Friendly Online or Retail Store

Top 5 Finalists

1. Clone Zone - Birmingham
2. John Lewis - Birmingham
3. LGBT Wolves Charity Shop
4. Prowler - Online
5. Selfridges - Birmingham

Best Front of House Person

Top 5 Finalists

1. Dean Taylor - Missing
2. Garry Prentice - Eden
3. Hilli Rishworth - The Fox
4. Lazlo Hollo - Eden
5. Lewis Brown - Dover Castle

Best Security Person

Top 5 Finalists

1. Dom Dawes - The Nightingale
2. Jermaine Holder - Eden
3. Rach Selvey - The Lion
4. Shiv Brijmohun - Missing
5. Tonie Whetter - The Village Inn

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THE DEATH OF THE COMING OUT STORY

by Kendra Hourd

Trisha Goddard turns her attention to me from the man who's about to don drag

"So how was your coming out, Kendra?"

The predominantly gay audience listens expectantly. I tell my 'coming out' story to them - and to two million daytime ITV viewers - and it prompts gasps and laughs in all the usual places. Then I dressed up as Elvis.

The Trisha 'Coming Out' show I appeared on took place in 2005. It was how I came out to my extended family – amidst the chaos of Big Brother contestants, a 'guess the gay' panel game and a civil partnership ceremony, all orchestrated by a lesbian porn film director who, by day, was Trisha's producer.

Why did I take part in this circus? It was simply that I love to tell my 'coming out' story, and this was an opportunity to tell it to millions in my own way and my own voice. The appearance also added another wacky side-story to my own legend. This is why we love these stories - because we own them, and when we share them with the rest of the gay community, they unite us. Indeed, backstage after the show, one young man was incensed that he hadn't had the chance to tell his story. It was a story he felt needed to be heard. He had run away to London when he was a teenager, and people needed to know that the streets were not paved with gold. As it turned out, this story had already been told by everyone from Dick Whittington to Queer As Folk. However it was his story regardless, he owned it, and being denied the opportunity to share it made him distraught.

But there's a problem. This show was in 2005, eleven years ago, and the process of coming out and its effects on the populace has changed and continues to change. Now, when newly met gay people come together and indulge in 'coming out' story swapping, there's inevitably a younger person at the table who seems slightly bemused by the ritual. When their turn comes, they often shrug and come out with, 'I told my mum, she said "Cool" and, uh, that was it.'

What?! That was it?

Frankly, this is not good enough. Where's the drama? I've heard some incredible stories over the years, with thrills, shocks and laughs. Their owners carry them in their hearts as a small, indelible part of what has made them who they are.

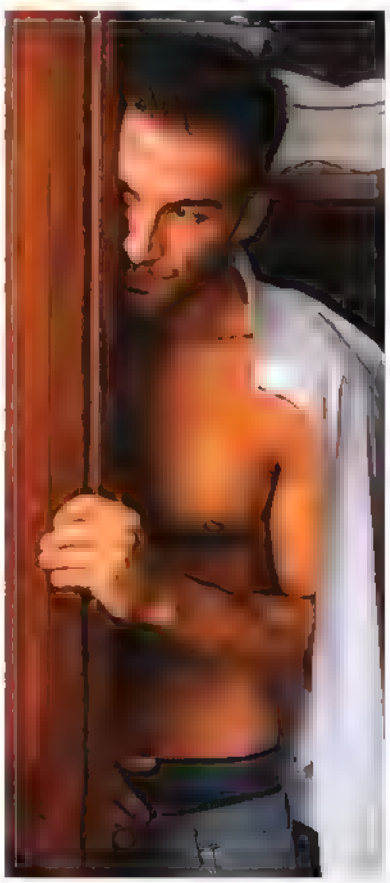
> "Coming out is losing its impact. Many straight people are now much more savvy about gay issues."

Coming out is losing its impact. Many straight people are now much more savvy about gay issues. Every soap opera has one of us, gay TV and radio presenters are now commonplace, and gay issues are regularly reported in the media. Also, being gay no longer means no children and no marriage. Is it any wonder that coming out is now met with 'Yeah, tell us something we didn't already know,' or 'Oh really? I love that Clare Balding. Isn't she great?'

Of course, the death of the 'coming out' story is undeniably a good thing. It's a sign of the times that society is becoming less and less concerned about sexuality, and that discrimination is on the decline. Members of the gay community are less inclined to define themselves first and foremost as gay. This is reflected in the demise of gay venues up and down the country. Some blame the smoking ban and internet dating/hook-up apps replacing clubs and bars as the place to meet a future partner. However, it's also apparent that gay people go to all manner of places now, as most establishments are gay friendly. In fact, 'gay friendly' is verging on a redundant term, as it's becoming similar to a venue advertising itself as 'non-racist'.

I should acknowledge, though, that the death of the 'coming out' story hasn't occurred yet. The nails and hammer are being carried towards its coffin, but there are still many gay people out there who are going through truly horrific experiences when they come out.

To all those unlucky ones, please know that the pain, trauma and hurt you're going through is temporary. Friends and family will adjust, or you will replace them and move on with your life. Then, one day in the future, when you're settled, safe, happy with new friends or a family of your own, you'll be sat around a table with newly met gay people and will tell your 'coming out' story. They will gasp and laugh in all the usual places, and the younger listeners will shake their heads in disbelief that the world was ever like that. Because in the future, there will be no more 'coming out' stories. In the future, there will be no such thing as coming out.



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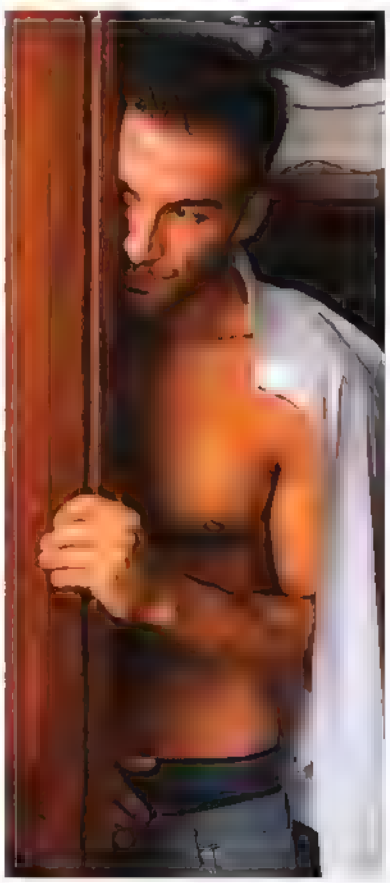


RuPaul's Drag Race fan favourites heading to Birmingham for 'largest' Battle Of The Seasons tour

Fans of RuPaul's Drag Race are in for a treat next month when the hit show's 'largest' Battle Of The Seasons tour visits Birmingham's O2 Institute

Producer Entertainment Group and Sidecar Management, in conjunction with World of Wonder and Logo TV, have announced the return of the 'world's biggest' touring drag review, based on international hit TV show RuPaul's Drag Race.

The tour is hitting the UK in March, visiting Glasgow's O2 ABC, Manchester O2 Ritz and London's O2 Forum as well as Birmingham.

The Battle Of The Seasons tour, now in its third year, will be hosted by series judge Michelle Visage and includes an all-star cast of past winners, runners-up and fan favourites from each season of RuPaul's Drag Race.

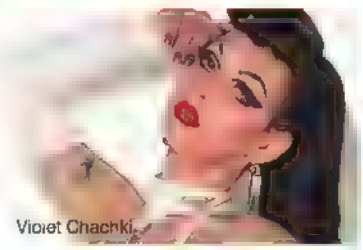
Acts heading for the Birmingham show on Sunday 27 March are Courtney Act, Katya, Sharon Needles, Violet Chachki, Willam, Jinkx Monsoon and Pandora Boxx.

Speaking about the tour, Michelle Visage said: "Last year, the world got merely a taste of RuPaul's queens, with the first global Battle Of The Seasons tour. This year, we're back – and these bitches are bigger and badder than before!

"Get ready for the ultimate RuPaul's Drag Race experience from the minute you walk through the doors. It's a once-in-a-lifetime extravaganza that you really won't want to miss!"

Tickets for the show, which takes place on Sunday 27 March at Birmingham's O2 Institute, are now on sale from www.livenation.co.uk.

Courtney Act

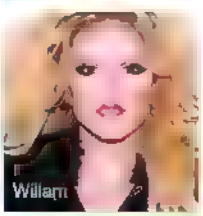

Violet Chachki

Pandora Boxx

Michelle Visage

Sharon Needles

Katya


Willam

Jinkx Monsoon

Equality Song for Birmingham to be debuted at school showcase

The public has been invited to hear the result of a Birmingham schools competition to compose an 'Equality Song' for Birmingham.

The eight songs will be performed at a schools showcase organised by Educate & Celebrate, the UK charity that makes schools and organisations LGBT+ Friendly. Birmingham City Council has worked in partnership with Educate & Celebrate for four years. The showcase will demonstrate a number of exciting and innovative approaches being used in schools to eradicate discrimination.

Primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities will showcase their LGBT+ inclusive performances to highlight the ground-breaking inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the curriculum.

Performances will include speeches, dance, songs, reading, two Equality plays for Birmingham – devised by students with Round Midnight Theatre Company – and highlights from PRIDE Youth Network campaigns.

The audience will be asked to vote for their favourite from the eight Equality Songs debuted at the showcase.

A further chance to vote will be made available via the Birmingham City Council and Educate & Celebrate websites.

There will also be keynote speeches from members of the Council, Colin Diamond, the Executive Director of Education for Birmingham City, the LGBT community and allies.

The event is free to attend and will be held on Tuesday 2 February from 6pm at the Birmingham Metropolitan University.

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Kwik Prick is a free rapid HIV test for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities and is available at Trade every Monday* from 12 noon until 6pm.

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- Uses only a finger prick blood sample
- Result within minutes
- 99.7% accurate
- May detect HIV exposure from as little as 4 weeks ago

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Appointments can be made for other days

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For more information call us on **0116 254 1747**
or visit us at **www.tradesexualhealth.com**

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HISTORY MONTH
2016

LGBT HISTORY MONTH

Birmingham LGBT

Join Birmingham LGBT for events throughout February to celebrate LGBT History Month and the final phase of our 'Coming Out Stories' Project. Events include film screenings, debates and a history walk.

Visit our website for more details
www.birminghamlgbt.org.uk

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Community Profile: A look at Birmingham 's Mature Gay Men

How long has Mature Gay Men been running and what was the reason for its creation?

The Mature Gay Man group was established at Birmingham's Fountain inn in December 2002 by two friends, Trevor Hall and John Hurst They d realised that there were no suitable venues or events available for the more mature gay man to meet socially, without loud music and the social pressures of the gay scene in Birmingham, which is predominantly occupied by the young. They felt that there was a need to provide a regular event where guys with similar outlooks could meet and socialise.

What does the group offer to its members?

The group offers its members a safe and comfortable setting to meet for an evening of social interaction. It gives them a reason to get out of the house once a month for an evening. Many of the members have been attending the group for a number of years, so have developed strong friendships within the group which often extend into their daily lives. This gives them support and help with life and its trials and tribulations. It s important to note that the group is not run as a pick-up point or meeting venue for sex practices. Members are happy and willing to include new members within the group, and every effort is made to make them feel welcome.

What type of people can enjoy the company of MGM?

Although it's called Mature Gay Men, no individual would be turned away due to their age Membership is open to all who feel they would benefit from joining and gaining support from the group. The group welcomes all, regardless of race, religion or disability. Often our members are mature gentlemen who feel unable to attend many events in the gay community because they don't identify with those groups. Many mature gay men are often isolated individuals who have few friends or family to turn to. It's of great benefit for an individual to have the opportunity to spend time with likeminded people and feel included within the community and society.

Does the group run special events throughout the year?

Throughout the year we run group events for members and their guests These include a summer barbecue. Dine With Daddy Sunday lunches and a Christmas dinner event in December In the past, there

have been garden parties, picnics in the park, birthday parties, trips to the theatre and other places of interest within the UK. We also join other LGBT groups for events and functions

How often does the group meet and where?

The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month, except in January when no meeting is held, due to the inclement weather and the excesses of Christmas and New Year. We assemble in The Fox, Lower Essex Street, Birmingham, from 7 30pm for a few hours. The landlord of The Fox, Andy King, is an excellent host, looks after our needs perfectly and offers a wide range of beverages. At the meeting, a raffle is usually run and a light buffet is served free of charge to members.

What has MGM got planned for the year ahead?

The year ahead will follow the same tried and tested path of previous years. The meetings will be monthly, as will the Dine With Daddy Sunday lunches. The summer barbecue and the Christmas dinner will take place as usual. There are plans for other events, to be organised throughout the year, with maybe an addition of an afternoon tea party event. Our website, www.mgm-midlands.org.uk, is on-going, with improvements and updates. The Diary there will display our events Our contact line. 07463 992196, or email, mgmbham@gmail.com, is available for those who wish to discuss their requirements personally

Twenty-minute HIV testing for gay and bisexual men in Stoke-on-Trent

Start the New Year with a clean sexual health slate by getting tested for HIV in a free and confidential drop-in. HIV testing is easier than ever before, and you can now find out your status via a quick fingerprick test, with results in just 20 minutes.

A total of 257 people took a HIV Point Of Care (POC) Test last year in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, and many were surprised by how quick and easy the test was.

Ben, who was recently tested at a drop-in session, commented "The test was really easy and quick to do, the staff member was really nice and getting the results within 20 minutes was brilliant."

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust (SSOTP) hold POC test drop-in sessions for residents of the region on the last Wednesday and Thursday of every month There are an estimated 30 people in Stoke-on-Trent living with HIV who are unaware they have the virus. One in 20 gay and bisexual men in the UK are HIV positive.

The longer the virus goes undiagnosed, the more damage it can do to the body which is why it s so important to be diagnosed as early as possible Treatment has become extremely effective in the last 15 years, and a HIV-positive person on treatment can now lead a full and active life and live a near-normal lifespan.

SSOTP's Integrated Sexual Health Prevention Team suggests people have a HIV test every year, when changing partners or after unprotected sex.

Don t forget condoms are your best defence against all sexually transmitted infections, including HIV

Pick up a supply for free at your nearest sexual health clinic.

Visit www.20mintesting.co.uk for more information and a demonstration video of a HIV POC test in action.

Matthew Lopez

Sexual Health Services Manager,
Birmingham LGBT, Birmingham

Born: Birmingham
Star sign: Leo
Age: 44

About Matt

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the Black Country. I lived in Smethwick until I was 18 before moving to Birmingham.

Single or attached?

I'm attached. Married, actually, to a very lovely man.

What makes you happy?

Four things that make me happy are my husband, my home, my cats and a nice holiday.

What makes you sad?

Daytime TV makes me sad because it's so depressing!

What makes you angry?

Prejudice and injustice. It makes me so angry but motivates me to do something to change things too.

If you could change any one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Well, stopping the wrinkles and receding hair would be nice.

What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

I couldn't possibly say!

Now that same-sex marriage has been legalised, would you consider getting married?

Well like I just mentioned, I already am. My husband and I actually got married quite recently, in 2015.

Coming Out

When did you first know you were gay?

I suppose it was when I was about 11 or 12 years old. But even earlier than that, I knew that I felt differently from most people and family around me.

When did you come out?

I first came out to my parents when I was 18. I had my first proper boyfriend and introduced him to them.

What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

Not good. There was a lot of bullying and I didn't really have anyone I felt I could confide in or be honest to about how I felt. It was the mid-80s and with the politics then, and AIDS exploding into the news, with all the prejudice around that, it felt like a very difficult time to be gay.

Who was the first person you told you were gay, and what was their reaction?

I first told a friend I worked with. She was great about it. She said she already knew and had just been waiting for me to say it.

What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their own sexuality?

I would say that there is support out there, and people don't have to feel isolated. Sometimes, family or the people who are nearest to you are not necessarily the people who will be the most supportive, but places like Birmingham LGBT, for example, could help people access the support that's right for them.

Have you ever had any experiences with the opposite sex?

It depends on what you mean by experiences. Some of my closest friends are women and we've enjoyed lots of great times.

Your Career

When you were younger, what did you want to be?

As a child, I wanted to be a vet, or something to do with working with animals.

What was your first job when you left school?

I ended up working in a bar whilst I was at college.

What is your role at Birmingham LGBT?

I'm the Sexual Health Services Manager. Birmingham LGBT is part of the Umbrella partnership providing sexual health services for Birmingham and Solihull. We have a new team in place now who are going to be providing sexual health and wellbeing services for LGBT people and men who have sex with men (MSM).

Why did you want to take on the role?

It's a really exciting new role. It's all about bringing a new approach and a new range of sexual health and wellbeing services to Birmingham and Solihull's LGBT people and MSM. Services are going to be accessible and inclusive of the whole LGBT community. There will also be some new services that haven't been there before. The new team and myself are really excited and passionate about this, and really want to make a difference for the community.

Tell us about the new sexual health services team...

Well, the new team is made up of very diverse, experienced and skilled people. We have a team of outreach workers, who will support the running of sexual health services in and around the gay scene, as well as other locations around Birmingham and Solihull. They will also support the running of clinics at Birmingham LGBT. We have outreach workers who will be working with gay, bisexual and other MSM, as well as a trans outreach worker, a lesbian and bisexual women's outreach worker, and a peer mentoring coordinator.

What are some of the new services going to be?

Later in 2016, we'll be launching a Trans sexual health clinic, which we're really looking forward to. It will be great to have a specialist service like this. We're also developing, and later this year will be running, a volunteer sexual health peer mentoring programme. A little bit further down the line, we'll also be launching a well woman clinic. All the details about these can be found on our website.

It's also important to say that our sexual health services are about sexual health and wellbeing in the widest sense, which means looking at people's situations holistically, for example, at issues around healthy relationships, empowerment and choice, supporting people around domestic and sexual violence, drinking or drug use, and supporting people to access some of the wide range of other services, groups and activities that people may benefit from through Birmingham LGBT or partner agencies.

What are the challenges of your job?

The diversity of people accessing the service, and when people feel comfortable and empowered through using services at Birmingham LGBT. If people become better informed, empowered and resilient through some of the support we offer, then that gives a great sense of fulfilment.

What are the highlights?

The diversity of people accessing the service and when people feel comfortable and empowered through using services at Birmingham LGBT. If people become better informed, empowered and resilient through some of the support we offer then that gives a great sense of fulfilment.

How does the role help the local LGBT community?

We're going to be developing a range of quality sexual health and wellbeing services, built and designed for LGBT people and

MSM, that are accessible - without the barriers that many of us have often faced in mainstream services. I really want people to know that that's what we want from this service. There has historically been, and still are, many barriers and inequalities that LGBT people come across whilst trying to access a lot of mainstream services. We aim to change that with the services we offer at Birmingham LGBT by providing a safe and culturally competent and sensitive space for LGBT people to access services, to grow and develop, and to achieve the best outcomes for themselves.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

At the moment, having just taken on my new role with Birmingham LGBT, I would like to be in a position to say that we've really helped to improve sexual health and wellbeing for LGBT people in Birmingham and Solihull.

Gay Scene

How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

I've been visiting the gay scene since about 1990.

And what's been your fondest memory of the gay scene?

Definitely all the great nights I had with friends when I first started frequenting the scene back in the early '90s. It was great fun. Oh and the first Birmingham Pride too.

Who's your favourite cabaret act on the gay scene?

That's a difficult one, and I don't think I'd be able to choose. There are lots of great acts on the scene.

Who's your favourite person on the gay scene?

Again, there are just too many great people across the gay scene to name just one.

What do you most enjoy about the gay scene?

I really enjoy just being able to relax and talk freely with my friends in some really nice venues.

What have you noticed about the way the gay scene's changed over the years?

Compared with when I first came out on the scene in the early '90s, there is so much more. It's visible and proud, and that's good.

How would you change the gay scene?

It would be great to see more visible cultural diversity across the scene.

Time Out

Where do you like to go on a night out?

I really enjoy a night out eating at a nice restaurant followed by either a film or the theatre.

What do you do to relax?

Going for a walk, vegging out and sleeping all help me relax.

What do you enjoy on telly?

I enjoy all sorts - crime dramas, soaps and documentaries.

What was the last album or track you bought?

How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful by Florence And The Machine.

Which one website do you spend the most time on?

Amazon. I'm always spending money.

What type of holiday do you prefer?

City holidays. I really enjoy exploring new and interesting places.

Quickfire

Who's your favourite actor?

Cate Blanchett for her talent, Daniel Craig to look at!

What's your favourite book?

I love the Dan Brown books. I really enjoyed Inferno.

Half empty or half full?

Half full - always.

What's your favourite food?

Indian or Chinese.

And how about your favourite drink?

One of my homemade smoothies.

Madonna or Lady Gaga?

Madonna. That's a no-brainer for a gay man of my age!

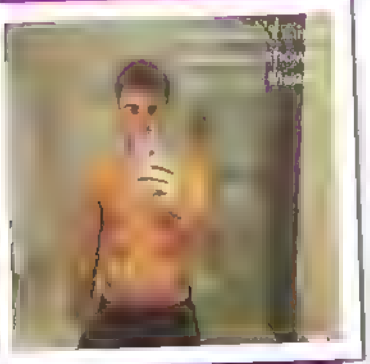
If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?

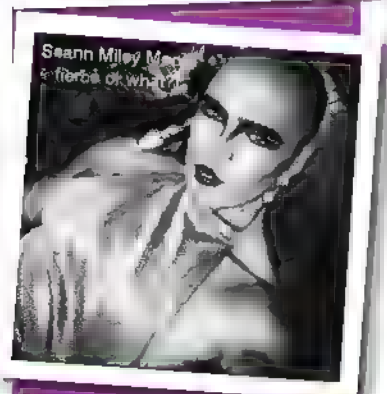
The Queen!

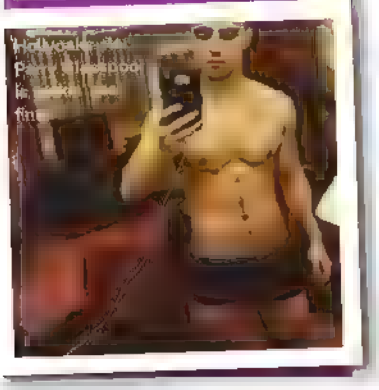
THE VIRAL ROUND UP

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ONLINE...

CELEB SNAPS!
OUR FAVOURITE PICTURES FROM INSTAGRAM...

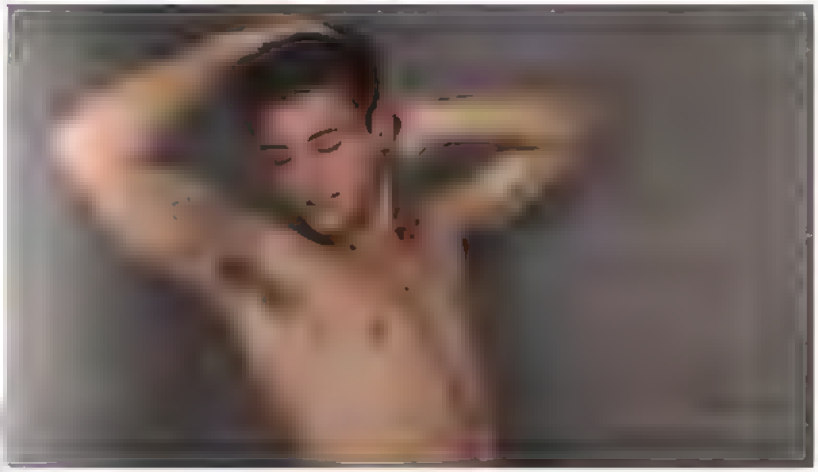






We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often, we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!

TOM DALEY explains the benefits of that famous saying, "Once you go black" in YouTube video...



If you're a regular reader of Midlands Zone, you'll know that we're BIG fans of British Olympic diver Tom Daley!

In an effort to encourage you to embark on a 'new year, new you' regime, Tom's been sharing simple life hacks that don't cost the earth to make a healthier you. This latest one explains a great switch you should make to ensure life's healthier, cheaper, and that you've got more energy. You might soon be saying "Once you go black, you'll never go back"...

Watch it here: youtu.be/Ik3p1FtSb6E

Errrmmm... this hilarious reaction video shows gay men touching a VAGINA for the first time!

This might be one of the creepiest and most WTF viral video recommendations we've ever made! Have you ever wondered what a gay man's reaction to touching a vagina for the first time might be like?

No, nor had we. But the results are pretty hilarious, and thanks to YouTube lesbian couple Bria and Chrissy, we can now find out! Wanna see this slightly NSFW action-packed video? Then watch it here: youtu.be/Ik3p1FtSb6E

READ MIDLANDS ZONE ON THE GO!
THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
ZONE
THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
LISA MAXWELL
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READERS' AWARDS
TOP 5 REVEALED
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LUCY SPRAGGAN
@ WWW.MIDLANDSZONE.CO.UK

IT MUST BE LOVE

Valentine's Day Gift Guide

01 PUMP! Flash Sports Jogger Trunk

PUMP! Flash Sports Jogger Trunk is a red sports boxer with a solid stretch cotton pouch and white and yellow binding details. On the front are two pocket designs, and strong PUMP. branding sits across the front of the wide waistband.

£24.50

www.bangandstrike.com

02 Emoji Pillow

Express your love for the other half with this fun and funky Emoj Pillow! Featuring heart eyes, it s one of the most popular emojis for showing just how much you love your partner! It's cute and cuddly just like your boyfriend or girlfriend!

£19.99

www.firebox.com

03 Netflix Subscription

It s the essentia ingredient for a good Netflix-and-chill session. So why not gift your bae with a monthly subscription to the world s biggest and best on line movie and TV show streaming service Whatever you get up to afterwards is up to you!

From £5.99 a month

www.netflix.com

04 Apple Watch

f you want to splash out on your significant other then why not grab them an Apple Watch. It'll let them glance at all of your filthy messages on their wrist, without the need to get their phone out of their pocket!

From £299.00

www.apple.com

05 Bondage Starter Kit

Make Valentine s Day that extra bit special and spice up your sex life with this Bondage Starter Kit from Clone Zone! It includes four adjustable wrist and ankle restraints, long connector straps and a good old-fashioned blindfold!

£19.99

www.clonezone.com

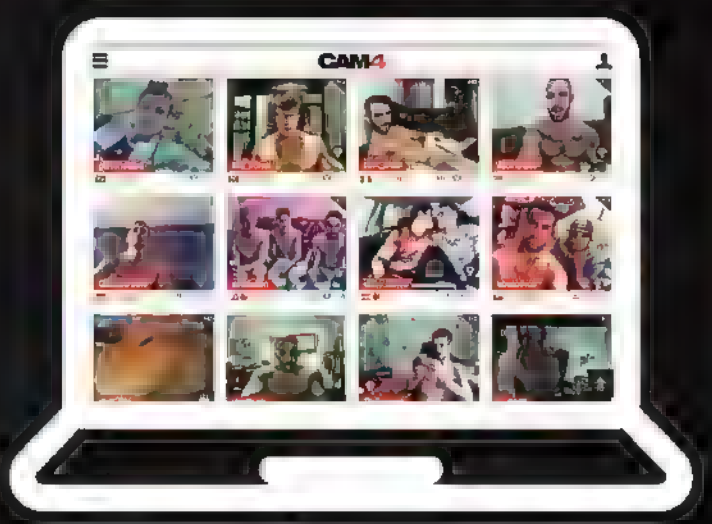
06 Spa Day

If you want the love of your life to just ch ll out and relax, then why not book them in for a spa day? Grab a massage and a lounge around the pool at Birmingham's Club And Spa. They'll thank you later

From £60 per person

www.the-clubandspabirmingham.co.uk

YOU + CAM4 = The Best Valentines Ever



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THE BEST IN NEW TECH!

01 Microsoft Lumia 950 XL

If you're looking for a change from an iPhone or Android smartphone, then the Lumia 950 XL may be the answer! Featuring Microsoft's much-improved Windows OS and a whopping 5.7 inch display, it could be the change you're after!

From FREE

www.o2.co.uk

02 Tile

Tile is a tiny Bluetooth tracker and easy-to-use app that finds everyday items in seconds, such as your phone, keys and wallet. Simply attach it to an item you keep losing, or are scared to lose and boom – it's trackable!

From £19.99

www.firebox.com

03 Google Pixel C

The all-new Google Pixel C is a great little tablet that runs the company's own Android operating system. If you prefer Android over iOS, then this 10.2 inch tablet may be the tablet killer that should feature in your tech arsenal.

£549.00

www.google.co.uk

04 Moto 360 Sport

We've featured the original Moto 360, but now Motorola have released this fantastic little sporty version. Track notifications without having to touch your phone, and track your fitness with the built in GPS and tracker. Perfect for any sports enthusiast!

£239.99

www.amazon.co.uk

05 Bluesmart

May we introduce to you the world's first smart luggage. The Bluesmart not only charges your USB devices up to six times, but you can lock, unlock, locate and weigh your luggage! It's also designed to fit in overhead lockers on most airlines.

£349.99

www.firebox.com

06 Pioneer XDJ-RX

Fancy yourself as a budding DJ? The XDJ-RX is a perfect marriage of two players, a two-channel mixer, pad control, and a large screen with dual waveform display. It inherits much of its DNA from a club-standard set up to bring powerful performance features

£1,149.00

www.decks.co.uk

KOOL KITCHENS

Great stuff for your kitchen...

01 Infinity Copper Base Saucepan Set

Enjoy prepar ng and cooking your favourite meals with this set of three copper saucepans. featuring a soft ergonom·ic handle for added com·fort and a non-stick finish to help prevent unwanted sticking or burning.

£51.99
dunelm.com

02 The Obsessive Chef Chopping Board

Become a Masterchef in no time at all with this innovative wooden chop·ping board. You can slice and dice with this cool kitchen accessory. The etched-on measuring guide gridlines and angles make for a truly professional result.

£13.95
thekitchengiftco.com

03 Acacia Wood 6 Piece Knife Block Set

Designed with hard-weak· ng stainless steel blades and wooden handles this six-piece knife set is sure to serve your every· day culinary needs

£47 99
dunelm.com

04 Drop Connected Kitchen Scale

This precise wireless scale can weigh in either ounces or grams; from a fraction of a teaspoon to six kilograms. A touch button on the front allows you to interact with the companion app without needing to tap your iPad with floury fingers.

£79.99
amazon.co.uk

05 Smarter Coffee Machine

Remotely brew your cof· fee from anywhere in the home, through the Smarter mobile app Adjust the strength of your coffee and select how many cups you'd like to brew.

£179.99
firebox.com

06 Olofstrop Kitchen Storage Unit

If you're short of work· space n the kitchen, this tidy unit is the answer. Featuring an extendable work top. shelving and a cupboard you'll have plenty of room to cook the dinner!

£170.00
ikea.com

FABULOUS FASHION FOR FEBRUARY

01 Black Padded Bomber Jacket

This stylish padded bomber jacket features zipped side flap pockets a zipped sleeve pocket and one inner pocket The quilted lining will keep you warm during the cold days of winter

£29.99

www.hm.com

02 Black Textured Stitch Roll Neck Jumper

Keep warm in this textured stitch roll neck jumper perfect when paired with black skinny jeans and brogues.

£19.99

www.newlook.com

03 Mid-Brown Leather-look Harrington Jacket

Perfect for days and nights out, this mid-brown leather-look Harrington jacket will ensure you're the sharp and stylish guy in the room.

£34.99

www.newlook.com

04 White Chest Pocket T-shirt

The staple classics are always the best. This simple white chest pocket t-shirt will tie any outfit together

£15.00

www.riverisland.com

05 Purl-knit Jumper

If you're looking for something different in your wardrobe, try this purl-knit jumper in slub yarn made from a cotton blend with long sleeves and rolled edges around the neckline, cuffs and hem. It's a great piece

£19.99

www.hm.com

06 Dark Blue Textured Knit Jumper

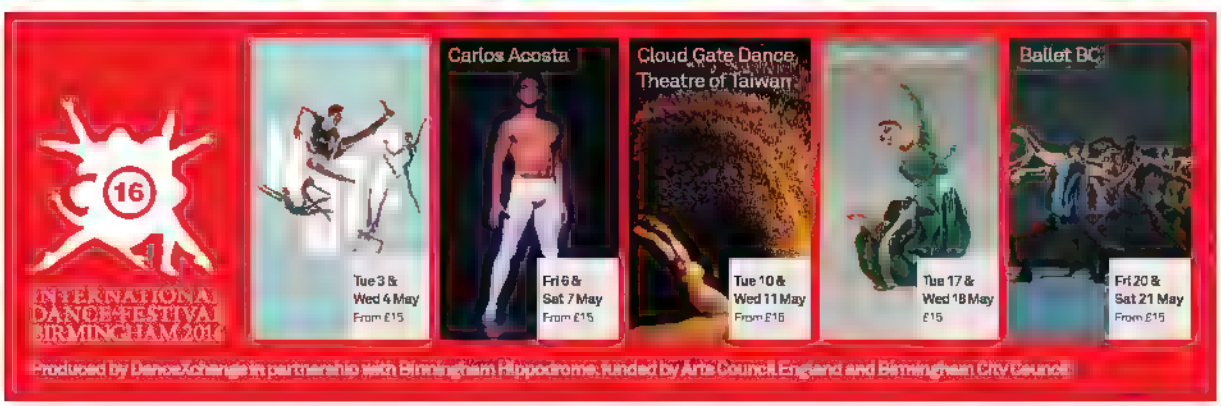
Want to keep warm? Then this dark blue textured knit jumper is the perfect item for you. It's a medium weight, regular-fit jumper featuring a crew neck and long sleeves

£30.00

www.riverisland.com

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

Spring 2016 A new look for a new year



BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

0844 338 5000 birminghamhippodrome.com

Calls cost 4.5p per min plus access charge. 5% transaction charge applies excluding cash sales in person

GET THE BUM YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF!

Ask many gay men and they'll usually tell you that, second only to better abs, they want to have a tighter and firmer bum. Well, here are five fantastic tips on how to tighten and tone those cheeks...

LUNGES

Although you may look like Joey from Friends doing lunges, they're an essential part of getting the bum of your dreams. Start with your feet at shoulder-width apart, with your hands on your hips. Take a step forward, bending at the hip, knee and ankle, shifting your weight onto your front leg. Push back to the starting position and swap legs. Repeat this 15 times per leg

CRAB WALK

If you've got one handy, grab a hula-hoop. Step inside, with both feet locking underneath each side. Now stand in a wide stance with your knees slightly bent and put your hands on your hips with your toes pointed outwards. Take a step out to the side and walk sideways for about 20 steps. Continue this in the opposite direction

STIFF-LEGGED DEADLIFTS

Grasp a bar at shoulder level with your palms facing towards you - a broom handle will do if you've not got anything better. Now retract your shoulder blades and tighten your core muscles. With your knees slightly bent, bend forward at the hips. Keeping your back straight and your eyes on the floor, bend forward within a comfortable range of motion. Don't allow your back to become rounded, though. Slowly return to an upright position and repeat 15 times

INCLINE TREADMILL

If you've got access to a gym, then this one is for you! Start with a flat grade on the treadmill and gradually work your way up to higher elevations. Perhaps try intervals of one minute flat, followed by another minute at a five-to-10% incline. The key to this exercise is not to hold on. If you do, you'll lose the benefits of walking on an incline

CRACK WALNUTS

If you've got some time spare whilst standing in a queue for the bus or in Tesco, then practise tightening your cheeks, as if you're trying to crack walnuts. Hold it for 10 to 20 seconds and repeat about 10 to 15 more times.

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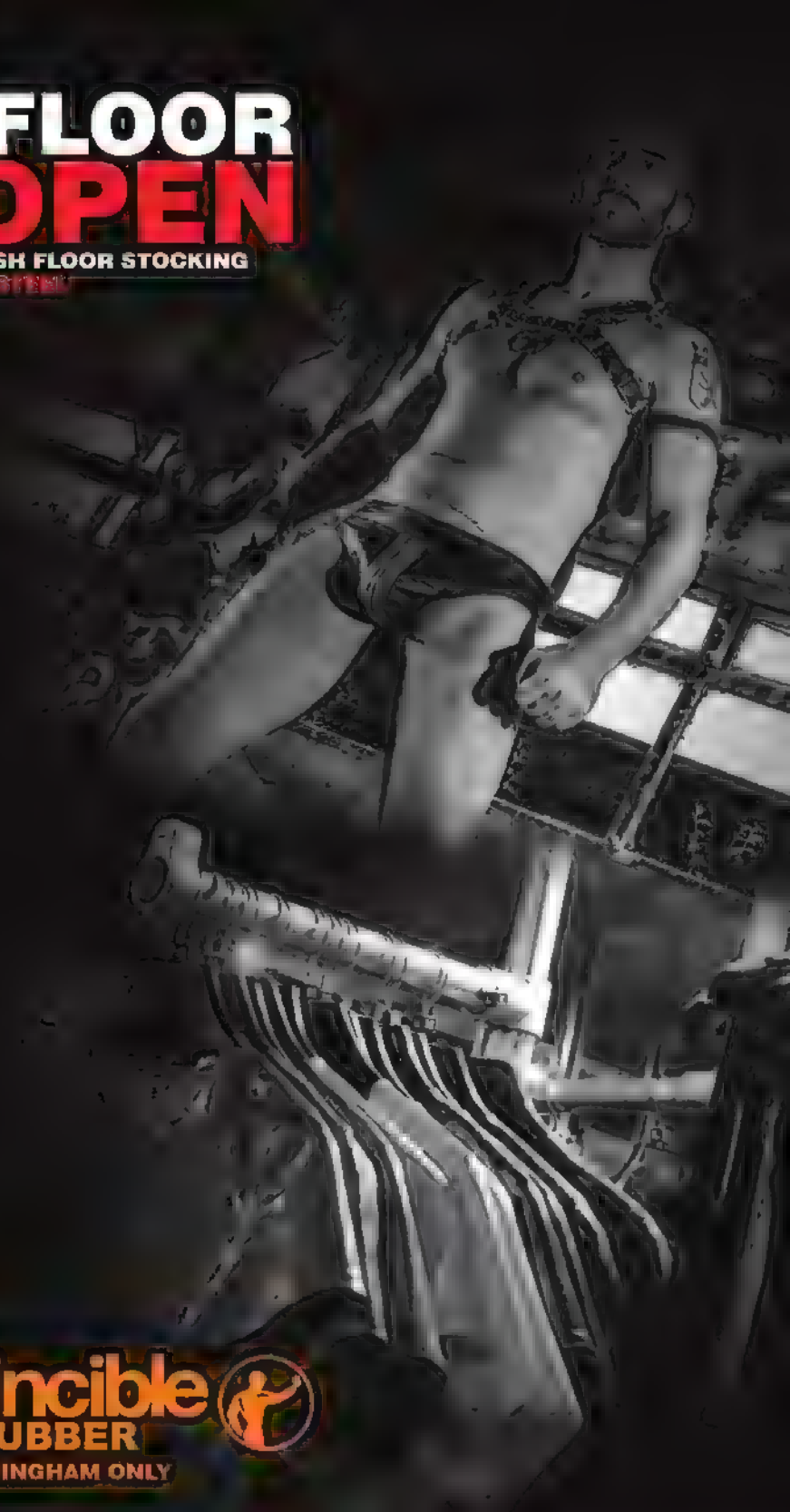

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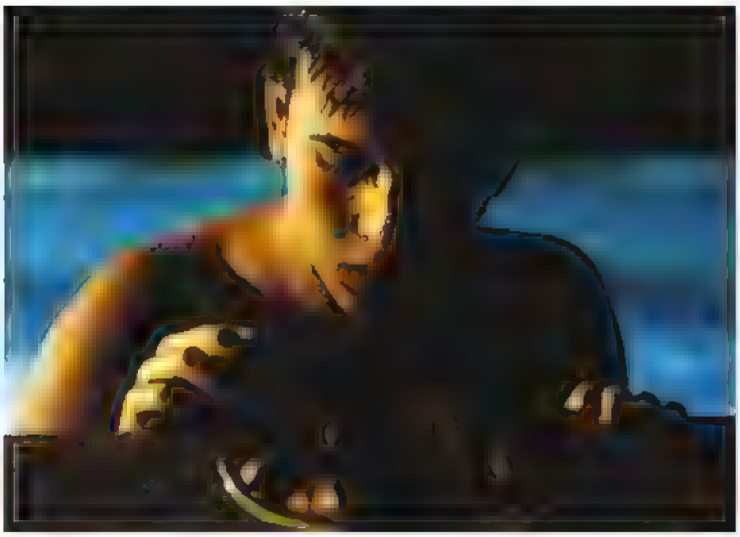
That's Entertainment!

This month's hot new DVD, music and book releases...

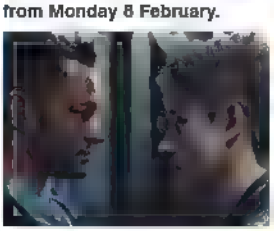


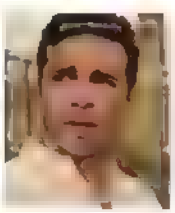
DVD BOYS ON FILM 14: WORLDS COLLIDE (18)

Boys On Film 14 features nine new, powerful and dramatic short films that will make you laugh and cry, question your inner self and give life to your darkest fantasies

Worlds collide in more ways than one in this stunning collection of award-winning short films. Confidence is violated, classes clash and desire is concealed – yet love still triumphs regardless of the consequences.

This collection of short films is available on DVD from Monday 8 February.





DVD HOLIDAY (15)

In a time of turmoil for Ecuador, Juan Pablo, 16, travels to the family hacienda in the Andes where his uncle, facing a corruption scandal, has taken refuge with his wife and teenage children. There, he meets Juano, 17, an enigmatic, self-assured black-metal fan from the nearby pueblo, who opens his eyes to a new, liberating universe. As his country and family heads for the abyss, the two boys' budding friendship develops into a fragile romance, and Juan Pablo is forced to define himself against his chaotic surroundings.

A sweet, romantic fable of young love against the odds, Holiday bubbles with tension.

Out now

BOOK SPARTACUS INTERNATIONAL GAY GUIDE 2016 by Bruno Gmünder

The Spartacus International Gay Guide has been around for over four decades now.

The new edition presents around 21,000 listed entries of interest to gay men, from over 130 countries worldwide, on over 1,000 pages.

Whether it be a hotel in Palm Springs, a bar in Hong Kong or a club in Buenos Aires, no other travel guide offers such extensive information regarding locations where gay men are welcome and where they can be themselves.

Each country is described in a detailed introductory text. This includes the legal and social situation for gay men, as well as unique cultural characteristics of the country in question.

Offering up-to-date information in a compact form that's at your fingertips, it's the perfect travel guide!

MUSIC WONDERFUL CRAZY NIGHT by Elton John

Elton John is back with his 33rd studio offering. The album features infectious and upbeat lead single Looking Up.

Wonderful Crazy Night was co-produced by Elton and T-Bone Burnett, and recorded at The Village in Los Angeles.

ZONE hotlist

THIS MONTH'S HOT EVENTS & THINGS TO SEE AND DO

1

MISS NIGHTINGALE

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Tues 9 - Sat 13 February

Matthew Bugg's LGBT musical has an honest, passionate and moving gay romance, right at its heart. Described as 'a heartwarming and hilarious cabaret-style story of love, loss and hope', Miss Nightingale is set during the Second World War and tells the story of feisty singer Maggie and her songwriter pal, George. As London crumbles around her, Maggie yearns for the bright lights. George, meanwhile, keeps hidden a deep, dark secret. But when wealthy club owner Sir Frank sidles into their lives, everything suddenly changes and Maggie is miraculously transformed into satirical music hall star Miss Nightingale.

2

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Tues 23 - Sat 27 February

It's the height of the Swinging '60s and Judy Garland is making an explosive London comeback.

battling against the ravages of time, alcoholism and drug addiction.

Featuring a host of memorable songs, including The Man That Got Away, Come Rain Or Come Shine, The Trolley Song and of course, Somewhere Over The Rainbow.

pays homage to one of the twenti- y's most iconic stars.

Lisa Maxwell stars.

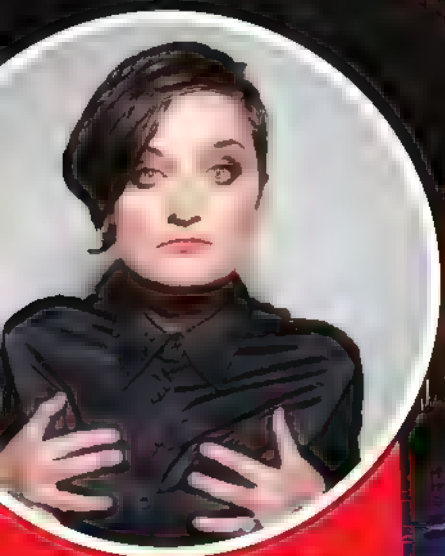
3 DENADA DANCE THEATRE: HAM & PASSION

mac, Birmingham, Thurs 25 February

The history of homosexuality in 20th century Spain is the subject of this brand new show from choreographer Carlos Pons Guerra and his DeNada Dance Theatre company.

The dance triple bill is being promoted as an evening of 'seductive, provocative and emphatically Spanish contemporary dance theatre that will subvert the senses'.

DeNada has a fast-growing reputation for the vigorously physical style of its shows, blending dance vocabularies to present work that's been described as accessible, humorous and poignant.



5 Y THEATRE: GAY COMEDY NIGHT

Fri 12 February

4 JOHN GRANT

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 1 February

John Grant visits Coventry this month to celebrate the launch of third album Grey Tickles, Black Pressure.

"I think it's a work of great, and I'm really proud of it," he says. "I wanted to get moodier and angrier on this record, but I probably had a lot more fun making it."

Despite ongoing health issues – including his HIV-positive status – the American singer-songwriter has refused to slow down. "I want to continue to challenge myself," says John, "to keep collaborating, to get the sound or the direction that will take me where I need to go. To keep taking the bull by the horns."

6 MATTHEW BOURNE'S SLEEPING BEAUTY

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 9 - Sat 13 February

Described as a fairytale for all ages, Matthew Bourne's gothic reworking of Perrault's classic fairytale has received rave reviews since making its debut at London's Sadlers Wells.

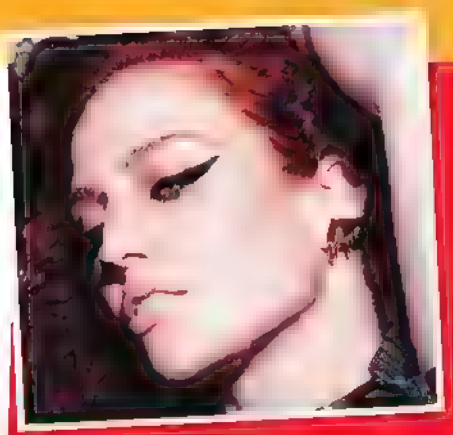
The decade of the 1890s – a period synonymous with fairies, vampires and decadent opulence – is the starting point for this haunting tale of good versus evil, which begins with the birth of Princess Aurora.

The action then shifts to the 1920s, as the princess makes the transition into adolescence, and then jumps forward once again – this time to the modern day – and her awakening from 100 years of slumber.

7 NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LGBT HISTORY

Various Locations, Shrewsbury, Fri 12 - Sun 14 February

This year's event, featuring talks from Stuart Milk, Peter Tatchell and Dr Emma Vickers, looks set to be a fantastic celebration of LGBT History
The festival also includes theatre, visual arts and film presentations
Visit shrewsburylgbth story.org uk for a full run down of events taking place across Valentine s weekend



8 JESS GLYNNE

[redacted]

9 CABARET XXL: FIGS IN WIGS

The REP, Birmingham, Thurs 18 February

Figs in Wigs (the lowbrow answer to avant-garde) nose-dive deep into our shallow d gital existence, gogging at how social media has bred a new form of narcissism. In a selfie-obsessed effort to tick every box, these girls are comedians, dancers, visual artists, musicians and circus enterta ners

10 FREEHELD

Starring Julianne Moore, Ellen Page, Michael Shannon, Steve Carell, Luke Grimes, Josh Charles. Directed by Peter Sollett (USA)

Last year Julianne Moore won an Oscar for playing a woman suffering from Alzheimer's She's now playing a victim of a very different stripe She is New Jersey detective Laurel Hester and the proud same-sex partner of Stacie Andree (Ellen Page) Peter Sollett's Freeheld is a more credible drama than Still Alice (for which Moore won her Oscar), and a good deal more moving. It helps, of course, that Laurel Hester is a true character and that Ellen Page is so damned good as the younger lesbian. Michael Shannon contributes male ballast as Laurel s professional partner, while Steve Carell adds light relief as a gay legal activ st

t s an emotive, eloquent and even funny drama and a testament to the skills of its supe nor cast

WIN! A Titus H Front Harness!

Ever fancied adding a leather harness to your wardrobe? If so, this is the competition for you!

We've teamed up with the lovely folks over at Clone Zone in Birmingham to give one lucky reader the chance to win a fantastic Titus H Front Harness - worth a whopping £64.99

Made from the highest quality, soft yet strong leather this sexy top harness will certainly ensure you look the part - as it does sexy porn star Paddy O'Brian (pictured)!

To enter this competition, simply answer the following question at www.midlandszone.co.uk

What material is the Titus H Front Harness made from?
(A) Lycra
(B) Neoprene
(C) Leather

Good luck!

To enter, simply visit www.midlandszone.co.uk before Monday 29 February

The smash hit LGBT musical tours the UK for the fifth & final time
MISS NIGHTINGALE - THE MUSICAL
"Witty, entertaining & wonderfully stylish" ★★★★★ GAYDAR
Reviews Hub
Remote Goat
Last Minute Theatre
What's On Stage
In Gay UK
Tue 9 - Sat 13 Feb
BELGRADE, COVENTRY
belgrade.co.uk
02476553055
Wed 17 - Sat 20 Feb
BUXTON OPERA HOUSE
buxtonoperahouse.org.uk 01298 72190

WHAT'S ON IN YOUR LOCAL GAY VENUES

OUT

FEBRUARY 2016

KATYA

THE RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE STAR HEADS TO THE MIDLANDS

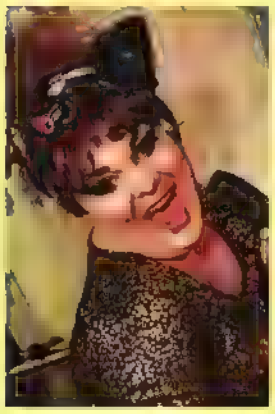
BIRMINGHAM FETISH MEN
Birmingham's newest and strictest fetish event returns to a popular city gay venue

BLIND DATE
Amy Laqueefa hosts a cheeky Valentine's Blind Date special at Missing Bar

CABARET GALORE
There's plenty of dragtastic fun to be had across the Midlands this month!

THE BIGGEST GAY
MONDAY NIGHT IN THE MIDLA
FREE ENTRY BEFORE MIDNIGHT!
10PM-3AM
MON 1ST FEBRUARY
MISS PENNY
MON 7TH MARCH
DRAG WITH NO NAME
Fabulous
PLUS: HAPPY HOUR FROM 10PM // DRINKS FROM £1 ALL NIGHT
C:21
18-21 ABBEY FOREGATE, SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE SY2 6AE. TEL: 01743 271821 WWW.C21SHREWSBURY.CO.UK

Let Amy Laqueefa set you up on a Valentine's Day **BLIND DATE** at Missing Bar



If you've not got a romantic evening planned for Valentine's Day, the team over at Missing Bar in Birmingham have got you covered!

Join Amy Laqueefa for her very own version of classic dating show Blind Date. Who knows, she might even set you up with the love of your life (or perhaps even your future ex.) Have you got what it takes to woo a complete stranger? Why not pop along on Sunday 14 February and find out!

[redacted]

BIRMINGHAM FETISH MEN returns to the city's Eden Bar

The second instalment of popular fetish night Birmingham Fetish Men is visiting Eden Bar this month.

Taking place on Saturday 13 February in the venue's marquee, the event will see hundreds of men wearing a choice of outfits ranging from leather and rubber to sportswear and skin wear. It's a strict dress code, so don't think just a leather jacket will do.

EDEN - BIRMINGHAM

XXL at The Core: The biggest men-only club in Brum

Men-only club night XXL returns to Birmingham this month - and it promises to be as good as ever!

Taking place on the third Friday of every month (19 February), the popular clubbing event sees men from across the Midlands come out to play and party!

The London club night's Midlands event features XXL's resident DJ, Christian M, playing the best hits and remixes to get the dancefloor packed.

And be sure to check out the dark room upstairs while you're there... Have fun, guys!

[redacted]

RuPaul's Drag Race star **KATYA** coming to the Midlands!

If you're a fan of RuPaul's Drag Race, the team at The Nightingale in Birmingham have got a real treat in store for you!

The Queen of Season Seven, Katya, is visiting the gay superclub for a live PA on Saturday 6 February!

Katya was voted Miss Congeniality by viewers of the hit US reality TV show, but what do you think? Head down to the club and take a look for yourself.

Enjoy the night - it's bound to be fabulous!

[redacted]

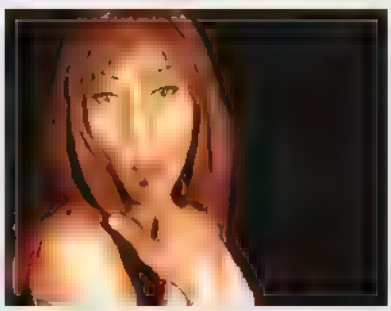
FRIDAY NIGHT CABARET every week at popular Birmingham bar

If you're out on a Friday night and looking for great cabaret to enjoy, look no further than Birmingham's Village Inn.

Kicking off the venue's February line-up is Kelly Wilde on Friday the 5th. The following week sees Drag With No Name dropping in, followed by Baga Chipz the week after. Then, as per usual, Sandra is back at the end of the month to see you into March!

Oh, and here's a one-off special for you - Sunday 14 February sees Ms Mo Bility keeping you singletons entertained in her sure-to-be-smashing Valentine's Day show!

[redacted]



MONDAY

February 1 8 15 22 29

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS Sunday to Friday All day & night Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

MINISTRY OF POUND with Dj Mike Emery from 9pm Selected drinks £1 Open until 2am
Missing Bar

CABARET WITH BAGA CHIPZ Every Monday night, head down to the Village Inn for a night of fun cabaret with the incredible Baga Chipz It is not to be missed
The Village Inn

SUGAR RUSH £2 entry
Nightingale Club

MONDAY MADNESS Weekly drink[illegible]
Bar Jester

OUTSKIRTS
Bar Jester

POUNDED Come and get Pounded from 6pm onwards £1
Sidewalk

WEST MIDLANDS

FABULOUS Fun & Games with resident host Marty (The girl who likes to party) ***Mon 1 Feb*** - Debut performance from Miss Penny! Free admission before midnight and just £3 after
C:21, Shrewsbury

THE MONDAY CLUB 9pm-5am Student night Everything is £2 (Shots £1) with DJ Lee Edward
Gorgeous, Wolverhampton

CHILL NIGHT with Kara[illegible]
Three Furnaces Telford

[illegible] THE PARTY STARTER[illegible]
Gossip, Stoke on Trent

STUDENT NIGHT F[illegible] all drinks £1.50 be[illegible]
Pink, Stoke on Trent

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2 Open from 2pm till 2a[illegible] for a quiet drink in a friendly atm[illegible]
The Boston, Northampton

DISCO 7pm-midnig
New Foresters, Nottingham

TUESDAY

February 2 9 16 23

BIRMINGHAM

90'S NIGHT - Every Tuesday night 10.30pm-3am
Nightingale Club

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday All day & night Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

SCREAM STAR SUPERSTAR[illegible] your host karaoke temptress, Gavina. Party starts at 9pm till late
Missing Bar

OPEN YOUR SNATCH Songs Games & Prizes with Miss Penny
The Village Inn

TUNE UP TUESDAY Fu[illegible] E[illegible] H[illegible]
Bar Jester

WEST MIDLANDS

BIG TUESDAY NIGHT PARTY Quid[illegible]

The Lion Bar & Club, Walsall

CAMP QUIZ
Three Furnaces Telford

DIVERSITY
[illegible]ing from pop & hip hop to indie
Velvet, Worcester

FLAUNT A twist of awesome t[illegible]
Brewery Tap, Worcester

SKYE'S PARTY NIGHT Dj and [illegible]ess 5pm 11pm
The White Hart, Wolverhampton

TWISTED TUESDAYS
Cherry Darling C[illegible]
Rainbows, Coventry

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2 [illegible] friendly a[illegible]
The Boston, Northampton

[illegible] TILL YOU [illegible] F[illegible]
New Foresters Nottingham

GAMES NIGHT F[illegible]
Nintendo Wii from 8pm
Dover Castle, Leicester

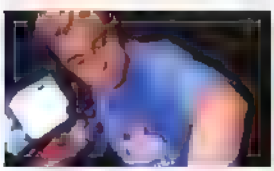
[illegible]

February 3 10 17 24

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday All day & night Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

2 GOOD 2 MISS Drinks from just £2 with DJ Mike Emery **Missing Bar**



KILLER KARAOKE - with Charlotte the Harlotte
The Village Inn

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS Shake your all feathers a Sidewalks ne[illegible] Mall ment
Sidewalk

[illegible]'S BIRDS AND THEIR POPE
The Fox

WACKY WEDNESDAYS [illegible] Hall e[illegible] [illegible] unt 2
Bar Jester

WEDNESDAY LINE Line [illegible] wed nigh
The Wellington

WEST MIDLANDS

DISCO & DJ with G[illegible]
Rainbows, Coventry

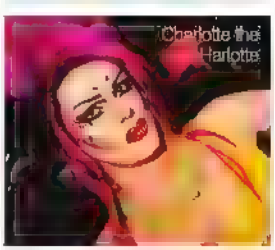
STUDENT CLUB NIGHT
Live DJs drinks promotions Free[illegible]e 10pm £4 afte
Three Furnaces Telford

WACKY WEDNESDAYS Ka[illegible] R[illegible] nes Open 9pm-midnig[illegible]
Rainbows, Coventry

EAST MIDLANDS

KARAOKE 9pm t[illegible] 3am. £2 drinks from 8pm til 11pm. Free Entry
The Boston, Northampton

[illegible] CREST
New Foresters, Nottingham



[illegible]

February 4 11 18 25

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday All day & night Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

CHARLIE HIDES ***Thurs 4 Feb***
Award winning cabaret artist YouTube sensation and man of 1 000 faces!
Eden

CULT Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm.
Nightingale Club

I <3 THE 90S From 8pm with DJ Dan Doors open from 2pm
Eden

LA VOIX ***Thurs 4 & 25 Feb***
Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist live on stage at Eden Great vocal talents combined with hilarious comedy make for a great night out!
Eden

POUNDED £5 entry Drinks from a £1 Dj Corey playing chart and dance on whilst Miss Marty and Dj Craig with all the pop and cheese on the middle floor
Nightingale Club

TANGO THURSDAYS with Marty Happy Hour 12noon-2am
The Village Inn

THROWBACK THURSDAY £1 20 bombs and great music
Missing

DROP THE BOMB start[illegible]
Sidewalk

SHOT EXCHANGE Drinks pr[illegible] [illegible] have the prices plum[illegible]t nd but the low prices d[illegible]y around for oni
The Core

WEST MIDLANDS

12.01 with Dj James Levett Open from Midnight until 5am with drinks from £1
Gorgeous, Wolves

THE KARAOKE LOUNGE Free entry Big va[illegible]e drinks With Dj Zar
The Lion, Walsall

[illegible] & DJ A[illegible]
The White Hart Wolverhampton

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2 Open from 2pm t[illegible] 2am for a quiet drink
The Boston, Northampton

GORGEOUS
Wolverhampton's BIGGEST Night Out!
Thursday - Friday - Saturday: 11pm-6am
700 CAPACITY | 2 BARS | EXECUTIVE LOUNGE | VIP BOOTHS
STUNNING SOUND & LIGHTING
FOR MORE INFO VISIT
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GORGEOUS CLUB | SCHOOL STREET | WOLVERHAMPTON | WV1 4LF | 01902 771122

VALENTINES

2 COURSES £19.95
3 COURSES £24.95

TO BOOK CALL
0121 622 2444

loft.birmingham
@loftlounge2
loftbirmingham
0121 622 2444

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday All day & night Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

ALL DAY EVERY DAY PRICES DJ Parm, takes over the weekend by playing the best of club classics, house R&B and all your favourites Enjoy all day every day prices too!
Sidewalk

BIG GAY FRIDAY Party anthems all night long with Missing's DJ James Open until the early hours

SING STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE with DJ Nikki
Eden Bar

FREAKY FRIDAY Big name cabaret at midnight Open until 6am. ***Fri 5 Feb*** Kelly wilde. ***Fri 12 Feb*** Drag With No Name ***Fri 19 Feb*** Baga Chipz ***Fri 26 Feb*** Sandra
The Village Inn

INFUSION Free Entry Absolute Anthems and Floor Fillers with DJ Corey Drinks from £2 £2 entry
Nightingale Club

KICK START Kick start the weekend from 9pm til the early hours Hosted by James

L8R With Charlotte the Harlotte Open until 6am every Friday
The Village Inn

MIDSBEARS - ***Fri 19 Feb*** - Monthly meet up and social group for Bears and Admirers with special drinks offers all night **Eden Bar**

LIP GLOSS - ***Fri 5 Feb*** - Celebrating it's 4th birthday. Cabaret from Miss Rose Garden and strippers Randy Knight and Zack. A night for the trans* community, admirers and friends
Eden Bar

OLD SKOOL GARAGE The first Friday of the month sees the Nightingale go back in time playing some of the best in old skool garage. A night not to be missed
Nightingale Club

SAATHI - ***Fri 26 Feb*** - Every last Friday monthly South Asian Gay and Lesbian club night Bollywood and Bhangra
Nightingale Club

SING STAR SUPERSTAR with DJ Nikki every Friday your chance to win cash
Eden Bar

VINTAGE FRIDAYS a night of soul funk, rock, motown, Northern Soul and all the classic favourites
The Loft Lounge

XXL - ***Fri 19 Feb*** - Men only night with DJ Christian M Early Bear offers until 11pm. Every 3rd Friday of each month.
The Core Club

alternate
Club Chic

KARAOKE
The Fox

RETRO FRIDAY
Bar Jester

WEST MIDLANDS

YOLO! Gorgeous residents spinning house and classics. Earlybird drinks from £1 50 with free entry before 11pm. 10 30pm 5 30am
Gorgeous Club, Wolverhampton

BANG
The Lion, Walsall

TV PARTY NIGHT A Men
The Greenhouse, Darlaston

CLUB NIGHT
The Three Furnaces, Telford

FREE ENTRY FRIDAYS
Rainbows, Coventry

FRIDAY SOCIAL with DJ Paul
The Bell, Stourbridge

Caberet at 12 30am Ope
The White Hart, Wolverhampton

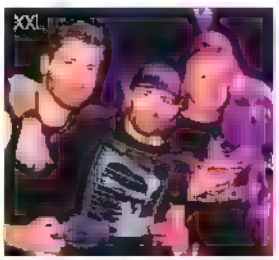
START THE WEEKEND Fre
sion before 11pm
Cabaret s now f
Pink, Stoke on Trent

TFI FRIDAY A fun a
ure of 70s high e
ferren, chai
Brewery Tap, Worcester

EAST MIDLANDS

PINK POUNDER Every Friday night with DJ Snuckies. £8 entry, £1 drinks Open 9pm-4 30am
The Boston, Northampton

CLUB NIGHT
Helsinki, Leicester



THE BOSTON
NORTHAMPTON

LARGE BEER GARDEN & SMOKING TERRACE

RECENTLY REFURBISHED INSIDE AND OUT

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 2PM DAILY

WEDNESDAYS

KARAOKE

10PM - 3AM

FREE ENTRY

HAPPY HOUR 8PM - 11PM

MOST DRINKS ONLY £2.50

Feat. Danny

FRIDAYS

9PM - 4:30AM

MOST DRINKS ONLY £1!

Red Bull · Strongbow · Malibu · VK · Gordons

Feat. DJ SNUCKLES

SATURDAYS

PARTY NIGHT

10PM -

FREE ENTRY B4 11PM

LATEST CHART, R&B, POP, DANCE

£3 ENTRY AFTER 11PM

£5 ENTRY AFTER 1AM

Feat. DJ CILLA

SUNDAYS

COCKTAILS + KARAOKE

9PM - 2AM

FREE ENTRY

PITCHERS FROM £8

2-4-1 ON ALL PREMIUM COCKTAILS DURING FEB

Feat. JOEYOKE

THE BOSTON . COLLEGE ST . NORTHAMPTON . NN1 2QP . 01604 604404

FACEBOOK.COM/THEBOSTONNORTHAMPTON

SATURDAY

February

6 13 20 27

BIRMINGHAM

80S HITS with Dj Dan from 2am it's back to the 80s
Eden Bar

THE ATTIC Available for hire. Call the venue for more info 0121 622 4256
Missing Bar

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT Over 2 floors, 3 DJs. Open til 8am. With Dj Lotty & DJ Richard Moon. With Dj Tonie in The Village Underground
The Village Inn

BFM - *Sat 13 Feb* - The second Birmingham Fetish Men's event with strict fetish dress code. Leather, rubber, sports, skin. Special guest Danny Beard
Eden Bar

BIG SATURGAY NIGHT OUT Every Saturday, with loads of drinks promotions
Nightingale Club

CULT - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm
Nightingale Club

DANNY BEARD - *Sat 6 Feb* - Live cabaret with 2015 Drag Idol winner Danny Beard
Eden Bar

KARAOKE & COCKTAILS in The Attic, plus music from across the decades
Missing

KATYA - *Sat 6 Feb* - Live PA from the incredible Katya from RuPaul's Drag Race
The Nightingale

L&R With Charlotte the Harlotte. Open until 8am every Saturday
The Village Inn

LISA Q JONES - *Sat 20 Feb* - Live cabaret with Lisa Q Jones, cousin of Laquisha Jonz
Eden Bar

MARY MAC & LA VOIX - *Sat 27 Feb* - Live cabaret with Mary Mac, the best drag queen in Scotland, and BGT semi-finalist, La Voix
Eden Bar

SATURDAY SESSIONS With Dj Simon Baker from 8pm
The Loft Lounge

SATURN5-FACTION Welcome in the weekend with resident Dj, playing the best of everything.
Sidewalk

SWAGGERLICIOUS Every Saturday night (Room 4,
Nightingale Club

YOUR DISCO NEEDS YOU featuring the biggest remixes, absolute anthems, dance classics, disco house and commercial with your host Twiggy
Missing

THE BREAKFAST CLUB E
Club Chic

FABULOUS SATURDAYS
The Core Club

DJ PARTY NIGHT Open
The Fox

#JUST SAYING
Bar Jester

KARAOKE Every Sat night
The Wellington

WEST MIDLANDS

SLAG 10pm-6am. Earlybird drinks from £1.50. Dj's Paul Bryant, James Levett & Josh B. Plus weekly guests
Gorgeous, Wolverhampton

BIG NIGHT OUT E
The Lion, Walsall

Drink promos un
Opm
The Three Furnaces, Telford

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT Ch
& Chards. Open midday 4nm &
Rainbows, Coventry

INCLUSION with big nam
& Dj
The Bell, Stourbridge

NOT TO MISS Free ad
before 11pm. Tanya H
cabaret show 9pm
Pink, Stoke on Trent

Cabaret at 12.30am. Open la
The White Hart, Wolverhampton

EAST MIDLANDS

BIG WEEKEND PARTY NIGHT 10pm til 6am. Free entry before 11pm, £3 before 1am and £5 after **The Boston, Northampton**

DJ Nik B
Helsinki, Leicester

SUNDAY

February

7 14 21 28

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS Sunday to Friday. All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
The Loft Lounge

DISCO STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE with Dj Nikki. Every Sunday
Eden Bar

LOCAL CABARET with Charlotte the Harlotte. Showcasing the best of the Midlands cabaret circuit every Sunday. ***Sun 14 Feb*** Ms Mo Bility Valentine's special
The Village Inn

MISS PENNY'S SUPERSIZE SUNDAYS Cabaret every Sunday hosted by the one and only Miss Penny on stage at 8.30pm and 10.30pm
Missing Bar

BLIND DATE ***Sun 14 Feb*** - with Amy Laqueefa. Meet the love of your life or your future ex
Missing

SUPER SUNDAY DINNER served
pm 1pm. Cure that hangover and
hoose from a variety of me
hirs or a ro
only £6.95
Sidewalk

CHILL OUT Look out for t
The Fox

SUNDAY IS FUNDAY
Bar Jester

THREE COURSE LUNCH only £7.5
The Wellington

WEST MIDLANDS

MARTY'S PARTY 9pm-4am. Fun & Games, Karaoke. Prizes and all round mayhem. Drinks from £2
Gorgeous, Wolverhampton

CHILL OUT After the part
Rainbows, Coventry

THE PARTY LOUNGE
Lion Bar & Club, Walsall

KARAOKE & DJ A night of fun
The White Hart, Wolverhampton

RANDOM PARTY NIGHT
Three Furnaces, Telford

EAST MIDLANDS

BRUNCH CLUB
3pm
Rainbow & Dove, Leicester

XXL LONDON

WEDNESDAYS 10PM - 3AM
SATURDAYS 10PM - 8AM
PULSE
No.1 INVICTA PLACE SE1 9UF

WWW.XXL-LONDON.COM

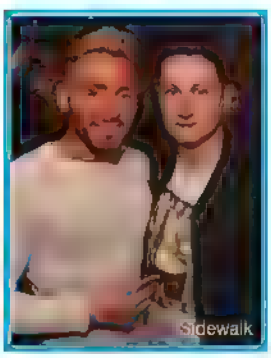
BIRMINGHAM

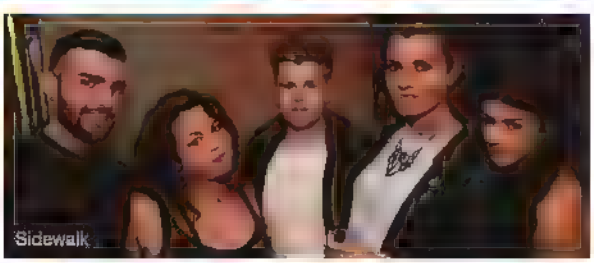
3RD FRIDAY EVERY MONTH
9PM - 3AM
THE CORE
135 SHERLOCK ST, BIRMINGHAM

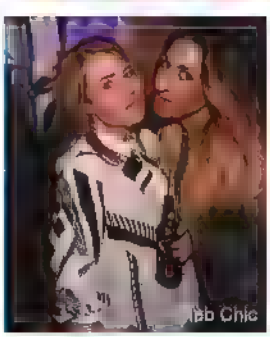
FACEBOOK.COM/XXLLONDON

Out and about around **Birmingham's Gay Village...**

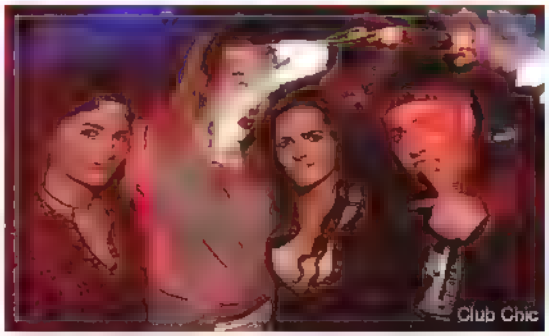
More great photos on **facebook**





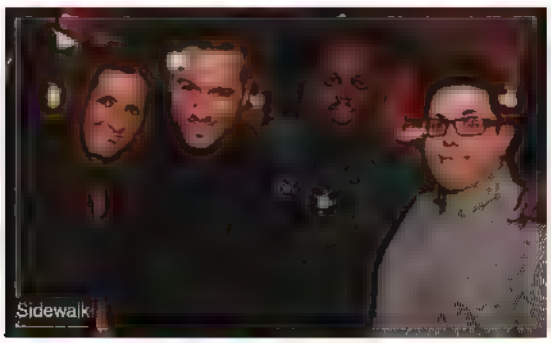


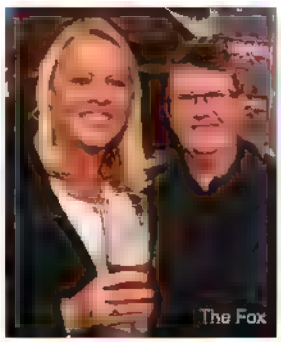
Pictures by Laura Byrne & Antony Collins


Club Chic

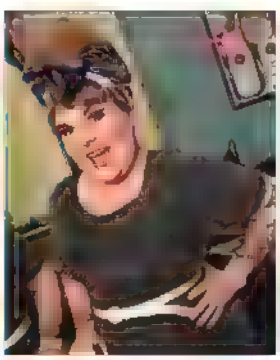
The Fox

Equator

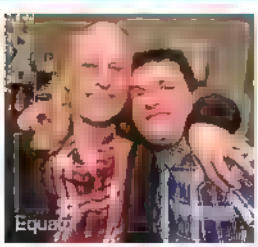

Sidewalk


The Fox

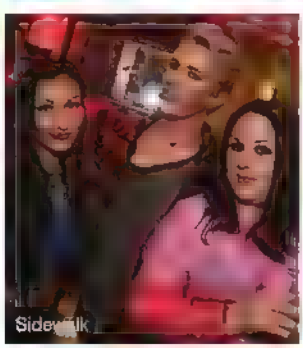
Club Chic

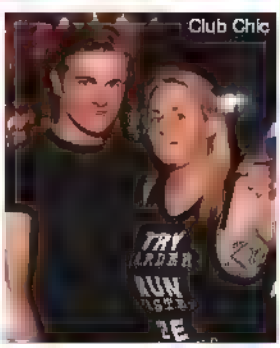


The Fox


Equator

Club Chic


Sidewalk


Club Chic

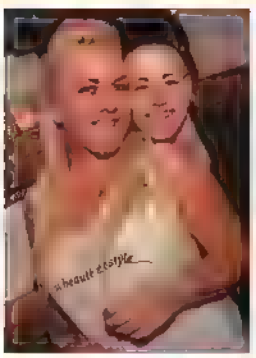
The Fox

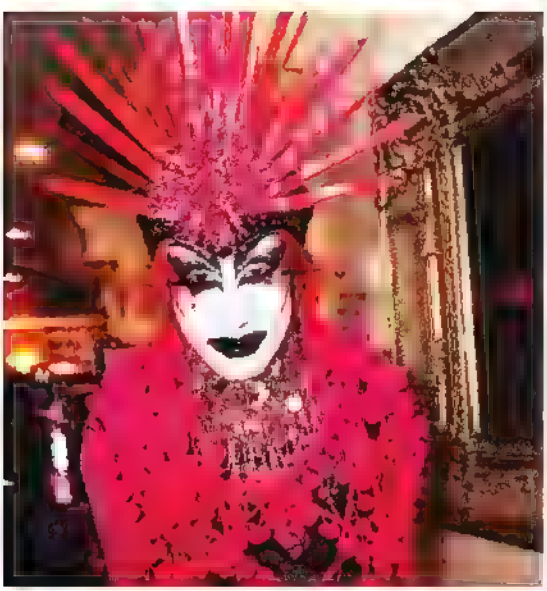
Sidewalk

The Fox

Boys, babes and beats at Birmingham's **Missing**!

More great photos on **facebook**
facebook.com/midlandszone.co.uk





Pictures by **Laura Byrne**

Missing VALENTINES

SUNDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

AMY LAQUEEFA'S

Blind Date

MEET THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE
...OR YOUR FUTURE EX!

DONT MISS OUR AMAZING WEEKLY NIGHTS

MONDAYS

TUESDAYS

FRIDAYS

WEDNESDAYS

SATURDAYS

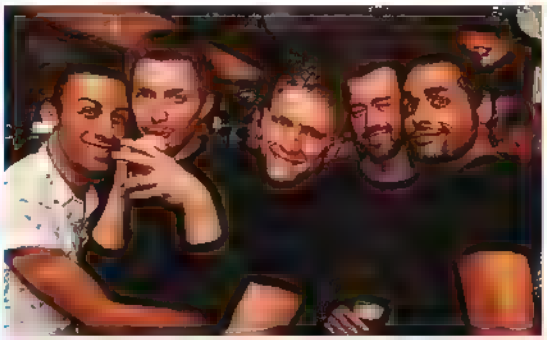
THURSDAYS

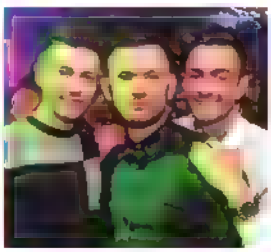
SUNDAYS

MISSING BAR, 48 BROMSGROVE ST, BIRMINGHAM, B5 0121 622 4256

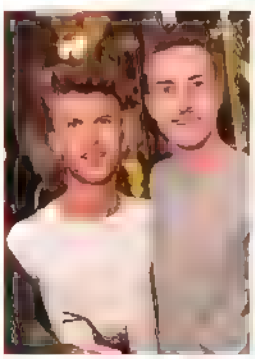
Missing WEEKLY

The Village Inn: Birmingham's gay party paradise!





More great photos on facebook



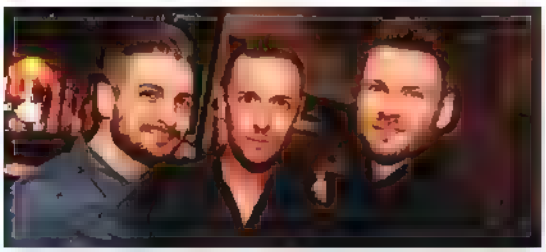
Photos by Lewis Byrne

THE VILLAGE INN

February

VILLAGEINNBIRMINGHAM @VILLAGEBRUM THEVILLAGEBIRMINGHAM

Spend your night out in style at **The Loft Lounge**!



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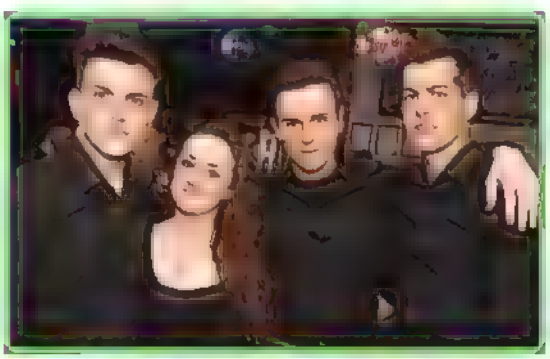

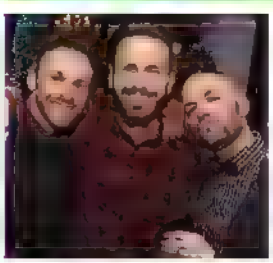

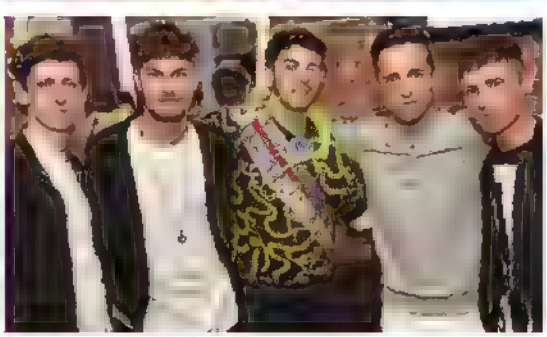

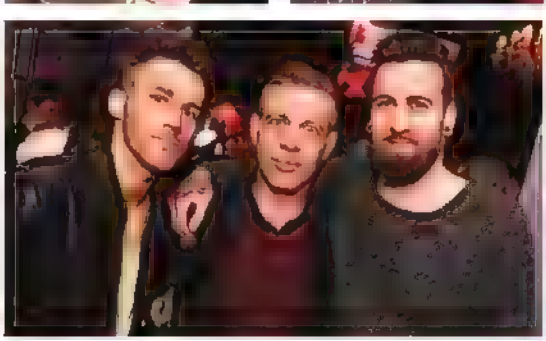

Photos by Laura Eyton

The Nightingale: It's Brum's gay superclub!

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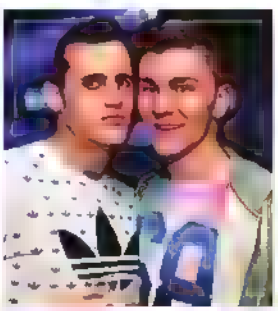

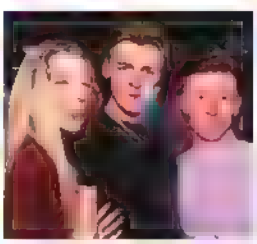

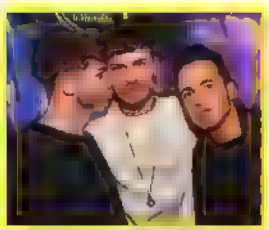

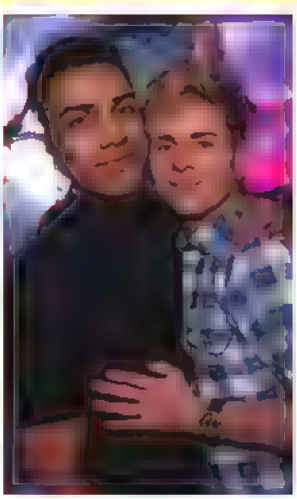

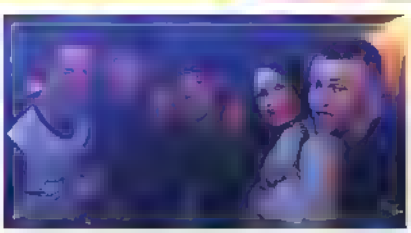

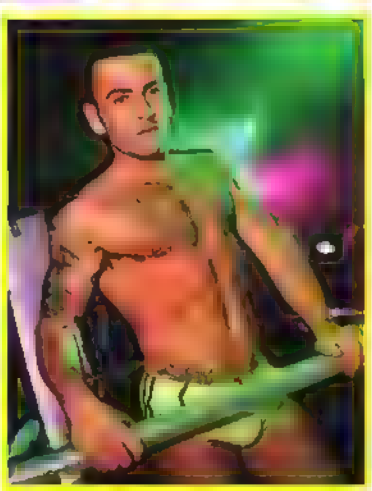

Photos by Laura Byrne

Birmingham's **Eden**: It's a popular place for pals!

More great photos on **facebook**
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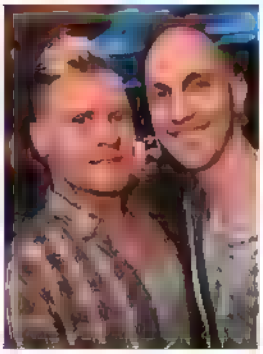

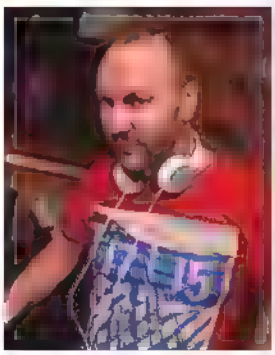

Pictures by **Laura Byrne**

FEBRUARY

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Open from 2p... day. 116 Sherlock Street Birmingham B5 6NB 0121 622 1953 | www.theedenbar.co.uk

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THURS 4th

Charlie Hides

Charlie Hides is an award winning cabaret artist, YouTube sensation and man of 1,000 faces.

FRI 5th

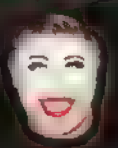
Lip Gloss

with your host MISS PENNY!

4th BIRTHDAY

Cabaret from Miss Rose Garden

2 STRIPPERS! RANDY KNIGHT ZACK



SAT 6th

Danny Beard

THURS 11th

La Voix

FROM 10PM DON'T MISS ME MY DARLINGS!

SAT 13th

BFM

The second of Birmingham Fetish Men's Night STRICT Fetish Dress Code. In the Marquee from 9pm. Leather-Rubber-Sports-Skin

Special Guest DANNY BEARD

Birmingham Fetish Men @Bfetishmen

FRIDAY 19th

Mids Bears Monthly Meet In the Marquee Special Drinks Offers All Night

ZONE

WINNER - Best Midlands Gay Venue for Men

MB MIDSBEARS

SAT 20TH

Lisa Q Jones

THURS 25th

La Voix

SAT 27th

Mary Mac & La Voix

EVERY THURS

90s HITS WITH DJ DAN

GREAT ATMOSPHERE

EVERY FRI & SUN

KARAOKE & DISCO DJ NIKKI

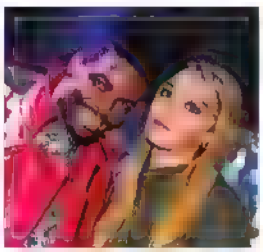
COME ALONG & SING WITH A FRIENDLY REGULAR CROWD

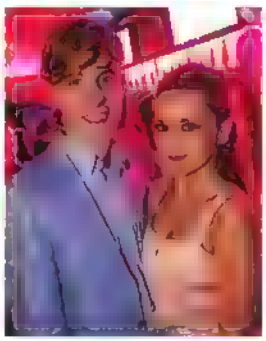
EVERY SAT

80s HITS WITH DJ DAN

POP & DANCE TILL 2 80s FROM 2-4 AM

Wolverhampton's **Gorgeous** is a great night out!





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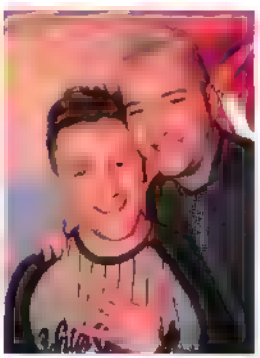

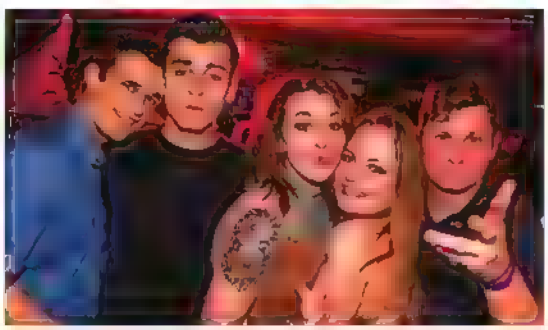

Birmingham

BAR JESTER
Holloway Circus,
B1 1EG
Tel: 0 21 6[illegible] 834+

BOLTZ CLUB
Lower Essex St B5 6QP
Tel: 0121 666 6888

CLUB CHIC
28 Horsefair B1 1DD
Tel: 0121 666 6806

THE CORE
Sherlock St B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 2797
www.thecoreclub.co.uk

EDEN BAR
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 1953
www.theedenbar.co.uk
/eden.bar
See pictures on page 54

EQUATOR
Hurst St, B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 622 5077

FOUNTAIN INN
Wrentham St, B5 6QL
Tel: 0121 622 1452

THE FOX
17 Lower Essex St
B5 6SN Tel: 0121 622 3213

LOFT LOUNGE
142 Bromsgrove St,
B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 6222 444
www.theloftlounge.co.uk
/The-Loft-Lounge
See pictures on page 52

MISSING BAR
Hurst St, B5 6N[illegible]
Tel: 121 6[illegible]42[illegible]
www.missingbar.co.uk
missingbar
See pictures on page 56

THE NIGHTINGALE
Kent St, B'ham
B5 6RD
Tel: 0121 622 1718
www.nightingaleclub.co.uk
thenightingaleclub
See pictures on page 53

RSVP (formerly Queer Street)
Hurst St, B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 622 2444

SIDEWALK
Hurst Street,
B1 1EG
Tel: 0121 666 6220
www.sidewalkbirmingham.co.uk

THE VILLAGE INN
Hurst St, B'ham
B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 4742
www.villagebirmingham.co.uk
/villageinnbirmingham
See pictures on page 50

THE WELLINGTON
72 Bristol St B5 7AH
Tel: 0121 622 2592

West Midlands

COVENTRY

RAINBOWS
Short St, CV1 2LW
Tel: 02476 551736

GLOUCESTER

THE WESTGATE
Westgate Street,
GL1 2NF
Tel: 01452 690045

KIDDERMINSTER

ROYAL EXCHANGE
31 New Road DY10 1AF
Tel: 01562 228619

LEEK

VALIANT
3 Stanley Street ST13 5HG
Tel: 01538 382812

SHREWSBURY

C:21 CLUB
Abbey Foregate,
SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
www.c21bar.co.uk
/C21Nightclub

THE PEACH TREE
21 Abbey Foregate
Tel: 01743 355055
www.thepeachtree.co.uk
/ThePeachTreeRestaurant

SPIRIT
22 Abbey Foregate
SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
www.spiritchampagne.co.uk
/SpiritShrewsbury

STOKE-ON-TRENT

GOSSIP
4 Hope Street
ST1 5BT
Tel: 01782 204957

PINK
93 Stafford Street,
ST1 1LS Tel: 01782 272772

STOURBRIDGE

THE BELL
20 Market St, DY8 1AG
Tel: 07826 518478

STRATFORD upon AVON

NO7
Prowd Crowd 15c Mon
mouth y, 7 Windsor St
Tel: 07787 642510

TELFORD

THREE FURNACES
30 Beaconsfield Rd
Madeley TF7 4JB
Tel: 01952 588521

WALSALL

THE LION
Birchills,
WS2 8NG
Tel: 01922 [illegible]

THE RED LION
Park St, Walsall WS1
Tel: [illegible]

WOLVERHAMPTON

BOND STREET TAVERN
14 Bond St WV2 4AS
Tel: 07825 305050

GORGEOUS
School St, WV1 4LF
Tel: 01902 [illegible]
gorgeousbar

THE WHITE HART
Worcester St
WV2 4LQ
Tel: 01902 423998

WORCESTER

THE FLAG
50 Lowesmoor
WR1 2SG
Tel: 01905 780467

VELVET CLUB
Angel Row
WR1 3QN
Tel: 01905 20218

East Midlands

DERBY

THE CROWN INN
40 Curzon St,
DE1 1LL
Tel: 01332 381742

LEICESTER

DOVER CASTLE
34 Dover St, LE1 6PT
Tel: 0116 255 3052

HELSINKI
94 Rutland St, LE1 1SB
Tel: 0116 254 [illegible]68

RAINBOW & DOVE
185 Granby St, LE1 1LA
Tel: 0116 254 7568

SLOANES
3-5 New Walk, LE1 6RL
Tel: 0116 255 2220

VENOM
(YOLO) Gay every Wed
Belgrave Gate, LE1 3GR
Tel: 0116 251 7986

NORTHAMPTON

THE BOSTON
College St, NN1 2QP
Tel: 01604 604404

NOTTINGHAM

NEW FORESTERS
St Ann's St, NG1 3JX
Tel: 0115 958 0432

THE NEWMARKET INN
38 Lower Parliament
Street, NG1 3BA Gay
Friendly

PROPAGANDA
8 Broadway, NG1 1PS
0115 979 9183

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e: adrian.parker@midlandszone.co.uk

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Page Nos

ZONE

TARGET OVER 60,000+ READERS EVERY MONTH
WITH THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY MAGAZINE
To find out more contact the sales team on 01743 281711

Arts Groups

ACE A Choir of Equality. Meets every Thursday 5.30-7pm. Tel: 01902 425092

ACTING OUT An acting group for the LGBT community open to anyone. Contact acting.out@btinternet.com or visit: www.actingout.org.uk

ARTPRIDE Art group. Contact beckytebbett@hotmail.com

BARDS & BOOKS Reading group. Every 1st Monday monthly. LGBT Centre, B'ham. erhadenshouse@hotmail.com

BGSO Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra. Contact: info@bgso.org.uk or visit: www.bgso.org.uk

DUDLEY LIBRARY LGBT READING GROUP 1st Friday Of Every Month. Tel: 01384 815560

GAPP (Gay and Performing Proudly) Birmingham. Call: Mike 07545 507791

LEICESTER POETRY OPEN MIKE NIGHT Meets last Tues monthly at The Red Tent. Tel: Bobba 07777 692881

LEICESTERSHIRE RAINBOW VOICES LGBT choir. Meets every Tues in Leicester. Call: Chris on 07740 855248

LGBT READING GROUP Every 3rd Wednesday monthly 7pm. Tel: Jayne 01902 552060

JOURNEY FILM GROUP LGBT Film group meets every 1st & 3rd Tuesday monthly. www.journeyfilmclub.co.uk

RAINBOW SPIRIT Creative activities for gay men. Call: Jon 07974 477206

RAINBOW VOICES LGBT choir. Call: Carolyn 07828 647384 or Steve 07813 025990

SMETHWICK LIBRARY LGBT Reading Group. 1st Monday monthly @ 5.45pm. Tel: 0121 558 0497

UNTOLD STORIES LGBT History project in Leicestershire & Rutland. e.dennis@leicesterlgbtcentre.org

WALSALL LGBT BOOK CLUB 1st Sat monthly. 11am Walsall Central Library. Contact: Kim 01922 653121

LGBT Social

ALLsorts Group for young adults (18-26) LGBT Centre, Leicester. Call: Paul Foxon 0116 254 7412

ANOTHER WAY LGBT Social group meets in Walsall every Saturday, 12-2pm, Village Hub, Caldmore, Walsall. Tel: 07475 942929

BROTHERHOOD Group for anyone transitioning from Female to Male (18+). LGBT Centre, Leicester. Call: Dennis 0116 254 7412

BRUM BI GROUP Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm at the HGL drop in. Tel: 07532 385760

BRUM DINING OUT Meets at a different restaurant each month. e: brumdiningout@hotmail.com

CORBY LGBT NETWORK Friendship, socialising and information exchange. 3rd Wed monthly. 7.30pm. www.corbylgbt.co.uk

COVENTRY LADS social group away from the scene. Call: 02476 229292

DE MONTFORT LGBT SOCIETY Based in Leicester. www.dmulgbt.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE CC Employee Network. www.derbyshire.gov.uk/councilequalities/employee_network/lgbt

DERBYSHIRE REACHOUT Men's Social Group. Tel: 01332 207704

DOSTI South Asian men's group, Leicester. Call: 0116 254 1747

DUDLEY GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S SOCIAL NON-SCENE GROUP 2nd Sat monthly. Free buffet lunch provided. Call: Matt Barlow 01384 243220

THE EDWARD CARPENTER COMMUNITY OF GAY MEN Call: 08703 215121. Birmingham contact: 0121 551 3161

EVERGREEN LGBT Social Group in B'ham. Tel: 07749 412269

FAN LGBT Social Events Group. Northants. www.fannorthants.co.uk

GAY CLASSIC CAR GROUP Call: Simon on 0121 565 4166

GAYMEZ LGBT Games Night in Wolverhampton. Twice monthly. Thurs 8-10pm. Tel: 01902 425092

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Gay & Lesbian Community Social group meets every Thurs @ Gloucs Centre 7.30. Tel: 07050 627273

HEREFORD LGBT Gay Men's Drop-in The Health Centre, Gaol Street, Hereford. No appointment necessary

HIGH 5 GROUP Social Group for men affected by HIV in Leicestershire. Tel: 0116 254 1747

I:ME Group for BME LGBT people in Wolverhampton. 2nd Sunday monthly. Tel: 07817 548802

LADS CAFE Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

LADS CAFE Weekly gathering for Gay & Bisexual men in Wolverhampton. Every Monday 6-9pm. Tel: 07788 673666

LAVENDAR MOVEMENT Planting flowers for all to enjoy. Meet every Tues. e: thelavendarmovement@gmail.com

LEICESTER GAY GROUP Call: Pete on 0116 291 6136

LEICESTER LGBT CENTRE CAFÉ Leicester. Call: 0116 254 7412

LGBT PARENTS Network for LGBT parents. www.lgbtparents.net

LGBT SHREWSBURY What's happening in Shrewsbury. lgbtshrewsbury.co.uk

LGBT STAFFORDSHIRE Stoke on Trent. Meets every Wed at The Observatory, Hanley. www.gaystoke.org.uk

NOTTINGHAM BREAKOUT Meets every Tuesday from 7.30. Contact: 01159476868

NUBIAN RAINBOW Celebrating black LGBT people in the community. West Midlands Social Group. Tel: 0121 446 1086

OUT EVERYWHERE Bringing people together since 1995. Call: 08450 060050

PINK SOU'WESTERS South West B'ham LGBT Group. Offers non-scene social events and activities. Call: 07976 274271

QUIZ NIGHT 1st Wednesday monthly 7pm @ Gorgeous, Wolves. Tel: 01902 425092

SANDWELL Gay & Bisexual Men's Social. Non-Scene Group. 4th Sat monthly. Free buffet lunch provided. Call: Matt Barlow on 01384 243220

SHREWSBURY CHILL OUT MONDAYS 1st Mon monthly at Old Market Hall Cafe. 8.15pm. Shrewsbury

SOUTH ASIANS LGBT 'Finding A Voice'. Social Group in Birmingham. Meet once a month at B'ham LGBT Centre. Call: 0121 643 1160

THIRD WAY Social Group for Bi people over 18. Every 3rd Tuesday monthly in Wolverhampton. 7.9pm. Tel: 01902 425092

TRUE COLOURS Derby based BME LGBT Social group. Call: 07779 560284

WAGS Walsall Activities Social Group. Over 18s only. e: sgawwalsall@hotmail.com

WARWICK PRIDE Social society. Organises events on and around the University Campus. e: hello@warwickpride.org

WORCESTER LGBT NETWORK Community Group. www.brewery-tap.org.uk

WS-MIDLANDS LGBT Social group. Every 1st Tues monthly 7.9pm in Walsall. Tel: 07895 661557

LGBT Forums

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL EMPLOYEE NETWORK Formed in 2002. E.mail: bccigbt@hotmail.com

BIRMINGHAM LGBT COMMUNITY TRUST campaigning and lobbying, promoting community cohesion and representing LGBT community's views. e: daveviney@bigbt.org

BIRMINGHAM LGBT COMMUNITY TRUST FORUM For LGB Groups. Quarterly Forum open to all LGB groups for networking. e: daveviney@bigbt.org

BLACK GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION FORUM. A safe discrete confidential space for black men to discuss issues that affect their lives. Call: 0121 446 1086

GAY BIRMINGHAM REMEMBERED LGBT history project. e: dave@gaybirmingham-remembered.org.uk

LEICESTER LGB & T CENTRE Host numerous social groups. Call: 0116 254 7412

LGBT WOLVERHAMPTON To raise and develop the profile of the Wolves LGBT community. Tel: 01902 425092

MIDLANDS LGBT EMPLOYEES NETWORK Call: 02476 492711

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Gay Men's Drop-in. Call: 01782 425969

PINK SHIELD Working to make Birmingham a safer place for the LGBT Community. Tel: 0121 622 2592

PRISM A forum for LGBT people in Leicester. Call: 0116 254 7412

RAINBOW HERITAGE Nottinghamshire. Call: 0115 934 9529

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Holds events for professionals and the LGBT community. Tel: 0116 254 1747

Mature Groups

EMBRACE Group for gay and bi men in Coventry aged over 50. Rainbows Coventry. Call: James on 07824 448717 or Nichola on 02476 231999

GREYPRIDE LEICESTER mixed group aimed at mature LGBT people. Call: 0116 254 7412

LADS LUNCH Monthly lunch for mature Gay & Bisexual men in Wolverhampton. 3rd Sat monthly 11am-2pm. Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT 50+ South Staffs social group for people 50+. e: lgbtstaffordshirebuddies.co.uk

MATURE GAY GROUP Meets in Shrewsbury every Friday 11am - 1pm. Call: Trevor on 07779 561640

MATURE GAY MEN For older gay/bi men. Call: Tom or Paul on 0746 399 2196

OLDER LADS CAFE Weekly group for mature (over 40) Gay and Bi-sexual men in Wolves. Every Monday 1-4pm. Tel: 01902 425092

OLDER LBQ Women's network social group. Derby based. Call: 07779 560284

RUBY'S A mature lesbian & bisexual women's group. Tel: 01902 425092

STOKE OLDER PERSONS GROUP Social group for mature LGBT. Tel: 01782 266998

Religious Groups

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE Meditation Drop-in classes. Tel: 0121 449 5279

BIRMINGHAM L.G.C.M. Christian Organisation group. Tel: 07943 010345

CHANGING ATTITUDE Contact: The Revd Colin Coward on 01380 724908

DERBY QUEST for Spirituality. Sun 5-6.30pm. Tel: 07970 812957

JOURNEY METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH Birmingham. Call: 0121 454 4406. Wolverhampton. Call: 07734 155664

LEICESTER GAY CATHOLICS A group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, their families and friends. Call: 07905 421915

LESBIAN & GAY CHRISTIANS Lesbian and gay Christian movement. Tel: 0121 453 1299 or tel/text 07943 010345

QUAKER Lesbian & Gay Fellowship. Social and supportive group founded on Quaker spiritual principals. www.qlgf.org.uk

QUEST LINKLINE A national helpline service for lesbian, gay and bisexual Catholics. Tel: 0808 808 0234

RAINBOW MOOT LGBT Pagans. All Pagan paths welcome. Call: Rob 07943 323989

STAFFORDSHIRE LESBIAN AND GAY CHRISTIANS Support group for lesbian and gay christians. e: ania2910@hotmail.com or call 07974 7647

Sport & Fitness

BIRMINGHAM BLAZE LGBT Friendly Football Team. www.birmingham-blaze.co.uk

BIRMINGHAM BULLS LGBT friendly Rugby Team. Call Andy 07708 536416 or visit: birminghambullsrfc.com

BOURNVILLE LADIES HOCKEY CLUB LGBT friendly hockey in south Birmingham. www.bournvillehc.co.uk

LEICESTER WILDCATS LGBT friendly football team. Call or text Gareth 07825 581938

LGBT Community Indoor Football. Wolverhampton. Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT TABLE TENNIS CLUB 1st & 3rd Wed monthly 7-8.30pm. Tel: 0121 643 0821

LGBT Zumba. Wolverhampton. Tel: 01902 425092

GAY OUTDOOR CLUB Walks twice a month on Sundays. Contact: gocwm@yahoo.co.uk

MIDLANDS OUT BADMINTON Birmingham. Call Andy on 02476 346141

MOSELEY SHOALS Birmingham's GOC Gay Swim Group. For info: call 0121 346 1522

NOTTINGHAM BALL BOIS Gay football team founded in 2006. Call: 07828 014952

OUTDOORLADS Outdoor pursuits group for gay lads. www.outdoorlads.com

STOKE PANTHERS BADMINTON SQUASH CLUB Call: Andy on 01782 266998 5167

WOLVES WALKERS Tel: 01902 425092

WOLVES WARRIORS Football Club. Tel: Andy on 07825 305050

Student Groups

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNI LGBT Social events every week. www.bculgbt.com

LGBT & FRIENDS SOCIETY University of Derby Students Union. www.udsulgbt.com

LGBT ASTON UNIVERSITY Tel: 0121 204 3000

STUDENT GROUPS Leicester University: contact Alex e: arp19@leicester.ac.uk or Hayley e: dmulgbtpresident@hotmail.co.uk

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM LGBTQ ASSOCIATION Social events every Wednesdays & Sundays. e: lgbtq@guild.bham.ac.uk

Women's Groups

BIRMINGHAM GIRLS e-mail network. e: Birmingham_Girlsnetworksubscribe@yahoogroups.co.uk

BIRMINGHAM GIRLS BOOK GROUP Women-centered book group. Meets 1st Sun of the month 3-5pm. Tel: 0121 622 3213

BI-WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP For information contact Bobbie at: space318808@hotmail.com

BOOTWOMEN. Walks in the Midlands area. Call: 07505 970991

BORDER WOMEN Network for lesbian and Bi women. www.borderwomen.net

L:BOW ROOM Social Group for women over 18. Meets every 2nd & fourth Wednesday monthly. Tel: 07817 548802

FOX FILM CLUB Women-centred film club, every 3rd Sunday monthly. www.foxbar.co.uk

KIDDERMINSTER GIRLS Lesbian social group, meets bi-weekly at local pub. e: jillygalore@

DO YOU NEED TO GIVE YOUR LGBT COMMUNITY GROUP BETTER EXPOSURE?

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Do you need to feature your group? contact Ryan Humphreys (Editor) on 01743 281722

To find out more about all these organisations & their websites

blueyonder.co.uk

OLDER LESBIAN GROUP for the over 40's meets every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1pm at 10 Norton Tower. Contact on sue@hotmail co.uk

RUBY'S Mature Women s Group Wolverhampton. Tel: 01902 425092

RUBYFRUIT WOMEN Leicester based non-scene social group for lesbian bisexual and questioning women of all ages Wednesday nights from 7pm Tel: 07512 156474

THE PINK LINK is a social space in Staffordshire for women with a different vision Call: 01782 266998

WORCESTER LESBIAN GROUP Meets twice monthly e me /myself_ f79@outlook.com

Youth Groups

1ST OUT YOUTH GROUP Leicester LGBT Centre. 15 Wellington Street Leicester Call: Paul Foxon on 0116 254 7412

DERBYSHIRE LGBT Youth Forum. Tel: 01332 207704

GALAXY Group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people aged 18 and under in Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire Call: 0300 123 0970

I-MIX Group for young LGBTQ people in Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Call: 01952 221410

INSIDE OUT (Sandwell) A youth club for LGBT and questioning young people and their friends. Tel: 0845 352 1276

OUTBURST Nottingham Support group for LGBT young people Tel: 0115 952 5040

OUT CENTRAL LGBT youth group for young people 13-19 who are LGBT or questioning their sexuality Call 07826 873458

OUT EAST Youth group based in Sutton Coldfield. Tel: 07795 611781

PRISM LGBTQ Support group for young people in Coventry Info@prismlgbtq.org

SHOUT (Sandwell) An LGBT youth steering group which works towards giving LGBT young people a voice in Sandwell Tel: 0845 352 1276

SPACE LGBT YOUTH GROUP A group for young people aged 13 to 21 Tel: 01543 411413

SPECTRUM - YOUNG LGBT SOCIAL GROUP Leicestershire Group offering opportunities for young LGBT people Call: 0116 254 7412

UNIQUE Group for young LGBTQ people Meet twice monthly on Sundays Call Matt or Justin 01384 243220

X2Y Group for young LGBT people in Wolverhampton. Every Saturday e

HIV/AIDS Helplines

ABPLUS A Charity supporting people living with and affected by HIV Call 0121 622 6471

FRESHWINDS HOUSE Holistic care and support for people with life threatening illness Tel: 0121 415 6670 (6 lines)

HEALTHY GAY LIFE - BIRMINGHAM Free confidential service working with Gay Bisexual men to promote sexual, mental and social health and well-being Tel: 0121 440 6161

LEICESTERSHIRE AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES Tel: 0116 255 9995

STAFFORDSHIRE BUDDIES Confidential help and support for people living with or affected by HIV. Tel: 01782 201251

SUMMIT HOUSE SUPPORT Practical Support and confidential advice around all HIV/AIDS related issues in the Dudley Sandwell borough Tel: 01384 243220

TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST Offer a range of services for those infected and affected by HIV and STIs Birmingham: 0121 694 6440 Solihull: 0121 694 6440 Coventry: 02476 229292 Nottingham: 0115 882 0121 Telford: 01952 221410 Wolves: 01902 711818

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers a range of confidential services advice and support for LGBT communities affected by HIV & STIs Leicester Tel: 0116 254 1747

LGBT Helplines

COVENTRY & WARWICK SHIRE FRIEND Tel: 02476 714199

DERBYSHIRE LGBT SWITCHBOARD Tel: 01332 349333

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTEGRATED RESPONSE PROJECT Leicester Tel: 0116 255 0004

GAYLIFE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Tel: 0300 123 0970

HATE CRIME NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Talk to a Hate Crime officer in complete confidence. Stoke area. Tel: 01782 266998 (Loleita Higgins) North Staffs Tel: 01785 233458 (John Wilson)

LBG COUNSELLING SERVICE Free counselling service for all sorts of LGB related issues Call: 01782 425969

LEICESTER LGBT HELP-LINE Tel: 0116 255 0667

LGBT AA MEETING West Midlands 8pm every Sat. Summit House, Dudley. Tel: 01384 243220

LGBT STAFFORDSHIRE Stoke on Trent & North Staffs. Tel: 01782 266998

NOTTINGHAM LESBIAN & GAY SWITCHBOARD 0115 934 8485 or 01623 621515

RAINBOW SUPPORT, HEREFORDSHIRE free and confidential support Call 07507 447834

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers counselling services and one to one support for LGB communities Leicester. Tel: 0116 254 1747

VICTIM SUPPORT Provides emotional support and practical help to anyone who has been a victim of crime. Tel: 0300 303 1977

Sexual Health

BIRMINGHAM LGBT CENTRE Support Groups, Sexual Health Testing, Cafe Community Groups, Events and more. Tel: 0121 643 0821

THE BRIDGE CENTRE Shrewsbury A free sexual health service for gay and Bisexual men Tel: 01743 344474

BROOK BIRMINGHAM Free and confidential sexual health services in the West Tel: 0121 248 2500

DUDLEY GAY MEN'S PROJECT Free & Confidential support service for gay bi-sexual and MSM men living in or around Dudley Call: Matt Barlow 07980 906895

HAWTHORNE HOUSE Sexual health testing also operates a Walk in Service every morning from 9.30am 11.30am Tel: 0121 424 3300 or 0121 424 2456

HEALTHY GAY LIFE Birmingham Free confidential service working with Gay Bisexual men to promote sexual, mental and social health and well-being. Call: 0121 440 6161

HEREFORD SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC @ GAOL STREET Open Monday Friday Call 01432 378915 for appointments and walk in times

HIV FAST TEST Free 20 minute HIV testing in Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Call: 01952 221410

HIV TESTING by appointment at Summit House, West Bromwich. Call Matt Barlow on 01384 243220 or 0121 500 5205

KWIK PRICK Rapid HIV Testing, Leicester. Call: 0116 254 1747

LGBT SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE Free services for the LGBT community who work or reside in South Staffs. Tel: 01543 411413

MEN ONLY Sexual Health Clinic at Heroes Health Club, Stourbridge. Call Matt 07980 906895

MEN'S HIV FAST TEST CLINIC Free 20 minute testing in Nottingham. 1st Monday monthly Call: Adrian on 0115 883 9081

OUTMINDS A social support group for gay and bisexual men with mental health problems living in the Solihull borough Call 0121 742 4941

SANDWELL GAY & BI MEN'S SERVICE Sexual health and social support Call Matt Barlow 07980 906895

THE RAINBOW PRACTICE Every 1st & last Wednesday of the month. Held at The Gay Men s Drop-in. Call: 0300 123 0970

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers a range of confidential services for LGB&T individuals and support for HIV & STIs including testing services Leicester. Tel: 0116 254 1747

WALSALL GAY MEN'S HEALTH PROJECT Delivering health and social care services to the LGBT community. Tel: 01922 613141

WHITTALL STREET A sexual health clinic located in Birmingham city centre Tel: 0121 237 5700

WORCESTERSHIRE GAY MEN'S HEALTH Project providing free confidential advice & support Tel: 01905 681751

Support Groups

ABplus Poz Gay Men's Group Meets 1st Thursday monthly for information and support Call: Peter on 07960 404926

ALCOHOL & DRUGS SMART Recovery SMART meetings in a friendly environment e: smartbgbt@yahoo.com

BIRMINGHAM PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP Meets 1st Wednesday Bi-monthly in Solihull. Tel: Helen on 0121 711 8105

BEAM (Black ethnic & Asian Minority) Social and Support Group in Leicester Call 0116 254 7412

COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE FRIEND gay lesbian, bisexual or trans? Need to talk? Call 02476 714199 Mon Fri 7.30pm 9pm

CHANGES Based in Wolverhampton Call: Ilsa on 07864240222 or Maria on 07542 450163

DOSTI South Asian men s support group. Leicester, Call: 0116 254 1747

GROUP ONE Derby based support group for LGBT families call: 07779 560284

HGL COUNSELLING & PSYCHOTHERAPY Mental and sexual health, for lesbians bisexuals gay men and trans people with a choice of male or female counsellors, Tel: 0121 446 1085 or 07976 919481

HGL MARRIED MEN'S GROUP Support and advice for married men Call: 0121 440 6161

HIGH 5 GROUP An HIV awareness group for gay bisexual men who are affected by HIV Group provides Support events outings Leicester Tel: 0116 254 1747

HIV MEN'S GROUP Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Call: 01952 221410

HIV WOMEN'S GROUP Shropshire Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

INFORMAL ONE TO ONE SUPPORT A service for young men south Asian men and African Caribbean men. Tel: 0121 440 6161 Email info@hgl.nhs.uk

LEICESTER LGB&T CENTRE Host numerous support groups Call: 0116 254 7412

LGBT ALCOHOL SUPPORT GROUP Offer support to anybody in the gay community who has alcohol related problems. Tel: Tony on 0121 440 6161 or 07760 195642

LGBT NETWORK Stoke on Trent & North Staffordshire Tel: 01782 266998

LGBT NETWORK Wolverhampton Holistic support for LGB&T people in the Black Country Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT COUNSELLING Wolverhampton Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT PROFESSIONALS in Wolverhampton Meets once a month Tel: 01902 425092

MIND OUT Mental Health Support Group in Wolverhampton 1st and 3rd Wednesday monthly Tel: 01902 425092

NATURAL HEALING For emotional and physical health Contact Alison Lesbian Homeopath. Tel: 01902 688087

NEW ROAD PARENTS Bromsgrove and surrounding areas Supporting parents of LGBT people Meets bi-monthly on the 1st Tue Tel: Margaret 01527 832492

PINK PARENTS A social networking group for all lesbian and gay parents and their children E: pink parents@virginmedia.com

RANK OUTSIDERS Support group for LGB armed forces personnel past & present Helpline 0870 740 7755

RAPE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROJECT BIRMINGHAM Free confidential counselling for LGBT survivors of sexual, domestic violence and hate crimes Tel: 0121 643 0301

SANDWELL Gay & Bisexual Men s Drop-in Service Every Friday Tel: 01384 243220

SWAIN Wyre Forest Meets the first Wednesday monthly For more details phone Tel: 07842 070 240

TIME OUT COUNSELLING Coventry For all LGBT+ people Tel: 07936 525668

WORCESTER LGBT NETWORK Tel: 01905 429800

Trans Support

LEICESTER BUTTERFLIES for info visit facebook.com /groups/butterfliesleicester

OUTSKIRTS TRANS-GENDER SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP The West Midlands largest transgender social support group Email sally@outskirtslgtg.co.uk or visit www.outskirtslgtg.co.uk

SANCTUARY Providing support and practical help Tel: 01902 744424

SANCTUARY STOKE Support people who are Transsexual, Transvestite or Transgender in North Staffs www.gaystoke.org.uk

TRANS SOUTH STAFFS Support and group for people who are Trans, Transvestite or Transgender Tel: 01543 411413

TRANS SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday monthly Tel: 01902 425092

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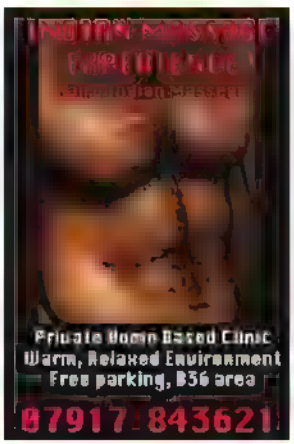

SAUNA DIRECTORY

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Tel: 0121 568 6126
Wilnenhall Road, Darlaston,
West Midlands, WS10 8JG
gay-sauna.com

SPARTAN
Tel: 0121 382 3345
127 George Road, Erdington
Birmingham, B23 7SH
spartanhealthclub.co.uk

SPLASH SPA & LEISURE
Tel: 0116 367 3932
61 Bedford St,
South Leicester LE1 3JR
splashleisure.co.uk

UNIT 2
Tel: 0121 622 7070
Lower Essex Street,
Birmingham, B5 6SN
unit2sauna.info

CELTS
Tel: 0116 285 6000
Le cester LE3 0F
celts-sauna.co.uk

CITY STEAM
Tel: 01332 209150
Mary's Gate Derb,
DE1 3F
citysteam.co.uk

CITY STEAM 2
Tel: 0115 959 8603
1 Lennox St
N ttingham NG1 1ER
citysteam.co.uk

HEROES HEALTH CLUB
Tel: 01384 442030
DY8 1TE
heroeshealthclub.com

MANZFIELDS
Tel: 01623 422257
manzfields.co.uk

CITY CELTS
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LE1 4RQ
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Tel: 0115 955 3103
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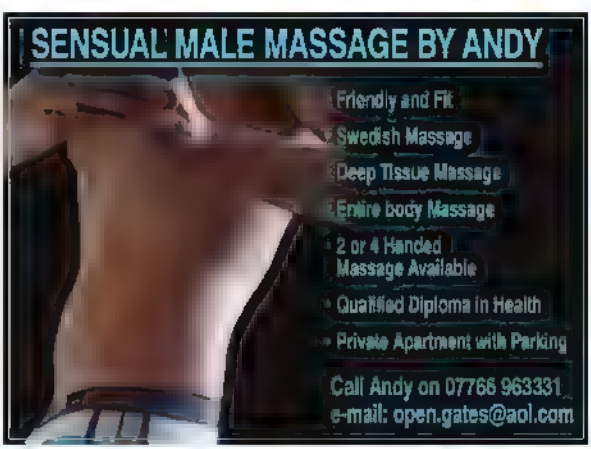
reflectionshealthclub.co.uk



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THE EDITOR'S NOTE by Ryan Humphreys

Readers' Awards: Have your say

And just like that, the first month of the year has been and gone. So now may I present the *February* edition of Midlands Zone!

We've got another great issue for you this month, including an interview with the amazing Lucy Spraggan. We also talk to Lisa Maxwell about her starring role as Judy Garland in the touring production of End Of The Rainbow.

And there's so much more besides...

It's time to vote!

Incredibly, it's that time of year again, when we ask you, our loyal readers, to decide who's worthy of a Midlands Zone Readers' Award.

Last month we asked you for your nominations and you voted in your thousands. So we've collated all the data and are this month presenting the top five in each category.

Voting is now open, right through until Monday 29 February.

There's a lot of hard work and dedication that goes into the Midlands' gay scene. From the bars and clubs themselves, to the DJs, bar staff, security and more. They all work their socks off to ensure you have a great night out, week after week and month after month.

Of course, it's not just the gay scene we set out to recognise - there are all the charities, community and social groups too. If we could give everyone an award, we would. But we can't - and that's why we need your help. So get voting!

We'll be announcing the details of where and when the awards will take place in the March issue...

Please donate...

Birmingham's very own gay charity, Birmingham LGBT, is asking for donations towards the running of its Health and Wellbeing Centre - more commonly known as the Birmingham LGBT Centre.

This fantastic resource is such a treasure for the city's LGBT community and costs £633 per day to run.

The centre is hugely valuable, as it provides a central hub for all, providing a range of much-needed services - from wellbeing awareness to older-people support. It also acts as a meeting place for community groups and provides sexual health services.

It would be a shame to see these services for our community disappear, so if you can donate anything to help the upkeep of the Centre, please do so. Visit www.blgbt.org to make a donation.

Milking it

Civil rights campaigner Stuart Milk, the nephew of the late US activist Harvey, is in the region this month. Stuart will be contributing to a National Festival Of LGBT History event in Shrewsbury over Valentine's weekend.

The festival's got plenty else on offer too, including a talk by gay rights activist Peter Tatchell and entertainment in the form of theatre, movies and visual arts. Be sure to get along and check it out.

ON THE BALL with Steve Ball

No Outsiders

Straight in at number 36 in the latest Rainbow List, published by The Independent, is Andrew Moffat, Assistant Head Teacher at Parkfield Community School in Birmingham.

The list recognises and celebrates those who have paved the way for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex equality, and actively celebrates those who, in 2015, worked to raise visibility and change in society.

I first met Andrew when I was part of the panel that allocated funds raised by Birmingham Pride. One beneficiary was an education project, led by Andrew, that produces jigsaws featuring gay couples, to teach young children about LGBT equality and different family structures.

"I'm always looking for new ways to get the message across, and jigsaws seemed like an ideal way to engage with schools and parents," says Andrew, who had the idea when teaching a lesson in the reception class at his school. "Children love jigsaws, and I noticed there was one with an image of a family reading a book together. I realised I had never seen a jigsaw depicting a same-sex family, and this was something that needed to be changed."

He asked friends to pose for the images with their children. The jigsaws proved to be incredibly popular at Andrew's school. He now has 80 more to give away to Midlands schools that are interested in using them.

Andrew has also written a book about teaching LGBT issues in the classroom: No Outsiders In Our School. The title was inspired by Desmond Tutu's quote, "Everyone is an insider, no matter their beliefs, whatever their culture, gender or sexuality".

Andrew's approach involves teaching LGBT equality within the Equality Act, alongside all the other equalities in the act.

At the moment, both Andrew's jigsaws portray white women, so he's now looking for male couples or same-sex parents from different ethnic backgrounds. If you would be happy for your family to be used on a jigsaw for schools, or would like further information on the project, contact Andrew at andy@equalitiesprimary.co.uk.

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